## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

# Board of Trustees Policy: Research Ethics (NAG 1)

## Statement of Intent:

The Board of Trustees of the Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) affirms that:

1. Research and development in education provision and practice is essential to improving the achievement of its ākonga;
2. Its own staff, as well as others with an interest in the education of ākonga who are blind, low vision and Deafblind, should be encouraged to, and supported in, carrying out research and development activities;
3. Care should be taken to respect and protect the rights of participants when carrying out these activities;
4. Research involving highly sensitive information will conform to high ethical standards.

This policy applies to all BLENNZ staff, and to research undertaken by non BLENNZ staff either for individual purposes, initiated for the purposes of BLENNZ, or initiated by another agency or organisation separately or in partnership with BLENNZ.

## Policy Requirements:

1. BLENNZ will provide advice and comment to the community on research practice, approve research involving the BLENNZ community, and may oversee and monitor this research.

2. BLENNZ may provide research access to its:

1. Ākonga, their families and/or educators
2. Staff and or Board members
3. Database
4. Facilities
5. Documents (other than private documents).

3. BLENNZ will have a Research Ethics Committee (REC) which will review and approve research proposals. This committee is tasked with ensuring that the privacy, safety and social and/or cultural practices of participants and their communities are protected, as well as those of the research participants.

4. The following factors governing approval will provide the basis for reviewing and approving research:

1. Research merit, including risks and benefits
2. Informed consent
3. Privacy and confidentiality
4. Minimisation of risk and harm
5. Social and cultural sensitivity
6. Acknowledgement of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
7. Avoidance of conflict
8. Respect for property rights
9. Appropriate consent given for participants aged less than 16 years and/or who may not be able to give personal consent
10. Retention of and access to, data.

5. The BLENNZ REC will include the Principal and have 4-5 members selected by the Principal. Members will collectively have an understanding of education of ākonga who are blind, low vision or Deafblind, the blindness community, ethics and research methodology.

6. Regardless of whether ethical approval is necessary, all collection of information about or from identifiable individuals must comply with the Privacy Act 1993 and its amendments.

## Policy Procedures:

1. All requests should be presented in writing and follow the requirements set out in the Research Ethics Approval Process for BLENNZ. Applications should be sent to the BLENNZ REC in time for it to make a considered decision on the proposal (email to: [ethicsapproval@blennz.school.nz](mailto:ethicsapproval@blennz.school.nz) )

2. The committee may approve or decline the proposal or identify where further information is required.

3. Wherever possible the decision should reflect the unanimous consensus of recommendations made by other members of the committee responsible for reviewing the application. Any departure from an agreed unanimous view must be formally documented.

4. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that they receive formal notification of approval from the BLENNZ REC before any formal research procedures commence. There is no process for which the BLENNZ REC will provide retrospective approval.

5. Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision of the BLENNZ REC, the applicant may appeal to the Board of Trustees.

6. A complaint to the BLENNZ REC will proceed according to the complaints process outlined in the BLENNZ Concerns and Complaints Policy.

## Supporting Documents:

Research Ethics Approval Process for BLENNZ

[Privacy Act](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/232.0/DLM296639.html)

[Standard Operating Procedures for Health and DIsability Ethics Committees (HDECs)](https://ethics.health.govt.nz/)

[Copyright Act 1994](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1994/0143/latest/DLM345634.html)

[Children’s Act 2014](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/57.0/DLM5501618.html)

[Website link: Privacy Commission](http://www.privacy.org.nz/publications/guidance-resources/health-privacy-toolkit/)

Approved: 

Date: 27 May 2022

Next Review: Triennial (2025)