# Operational Policy: Intimate and Personal Care (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) recognises that when working with BLENNZ ākonga who are blind, deafblind or have low vision and who may have additional learning needs BLENNZ staff will be required to provide assistance and/or care in personal and intimate ways.

All ākonga have a right to safety, privacy and dignity. When contact of a physical or intimate nature is required, depending on their abilities, age and maturity, ākonga should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.

BLENNZ is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of ākonga will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat ākonga with respect when intimate care is given. No ākonga should be attended in a way that causes distress or pain. Ākonga must always be treated with sensitivity to their individual needs.

## Definitions:

Intimate care may be defined as an activity required to meet the personal care needs of an individual child in partnership with the parent, career and the child. In BLENNZ environments, or when involved in activities outside of a BLENNZ environment, this may occur on a regular basis or during a one-off incident. Intimate care is any care which involves one of the following:

* Assisting ākonga change their clothes
* Changing, showering or washing ākonga
* Assisting with toileting and/or nappy changing
* Supervision of ākonga in intimate self care
* Assisting with menstrual care
* Providing first aid assistance
* Providing comfort to an upset or distressed ākonga
* Feeding ākonga
* Providing oral care
* Assisting ākonga who require a specific medical procedure and who is not able to carry this out unaided. The staff member must be suitably trained and a plan made in collaboration with family. (e.g. suppositories, enteral feeds, catheter / stoma care.)

## Principles of Intimate Care

The following are fundamental principles on which the Policy and Procedures are based. Ākonga have the right to:

* be safe
* have personal privacy
* be valued as an individual
* be treated with dignity and respect
* be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
* express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account
* have a level of intimate care that is as consistent as possible.

## Policy Guidelines:

1. Involve ākonga in the intimate care. Encourage independence and ensure they have choices where possible.
2. Treat ākonga with dignity and respect and ensure privacy appropriate to their age and situation.
3. Ensure practice in intimate care is consistent. Only employed staff carry out care activities. Practicum students and volunteers do not undertake intimate care.
4. Be aware of own limitations. Staff (including long term relieving staff) should only carry out care activities and procedures if they are understood, have undertaken the appropriate training as required, and the staff feel competent and confident to carry these out.
5. Promote positive self-esteem and body image. The approach to intimate care can convey message to ākonga about their body worth.
6. If you have any concerns you must report them to your designated manager / teacher.
7. Document intimate care provided that outlines the nature of the care, date, time and staff involved.

## Developing a care plan

If Homai Campus School ākonga require a high level of physical care a specialist will be involved to develop a care plan and to show the teaching staff strategies and techniques e.g. for supporting ākonga. The plan should be available to staff and must respect the dignity and privacy of the ākonga. The care plan will be discussed with the family / caregivers prior to finalisation.

## Supporting Documentation:

### Policies:

* Child Protection
* Managing Ākonga attending BLENNZ Programmes
* Ākonga Mental Health and Wellbeing
* Administration of Medication
* Handling and Transfer of Ākonga

### Procedures:

* Early Childhood Procedures for Intimate Care
* Homai Campus School Procedures for Intimate Care
* Residential and Immersion Procedures for Intimate Care

### Websites:

[Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children](https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/)

Approved: 

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