# Operational Policy: Food Allergies (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) has a legal obligation to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for ngā ākonga and staff. This includes ensuring severe allergies are managed appropriately.

A food allergy occurs when a person’s immune system reacts to allergens that are harmless to other people. Common food allergies can be caused by peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish and shellfish, soy and wheat.

In addition to allergies some ākonga and staff may be affected by food intolerances. These reactions are not the same as allergies, but may include rashes and swelling of the skin, asthma, irritable bowel symptoms, migraines, headaches, diarrhoea etc.

BLENNZ will have systems in place to ensure staff working with ākonga at risk can recognise the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and know what to do.

## Policy Guidelines:

1. Allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements will be the shared responsibility of ākonga, whānau and BLENNZ. Medical advice may be sought when a parent or guardian identifies a serious allergy.

2. It is a staff member’s responsibility to notify appropriate staff within BLENNZ if they suffer from a severe allergy or food intolerance, their management plan should this occur, and emergency contact information. Should they be visiting another BLENNZ site the staff member must also ensure that this information is provided to that site prior to their visit.

3. If ākonga or staff allergies are life threatening, a management plan will be put in place to ensure all appropriate staff know emergency protocols.

4. Due to the severity of some allergies, when ākonga or a staff member with a severe allergy attends any BLENNZ facility, that facility will become totally free of such products. During these times BLENNZ will request parents and staff to not bring or use these ingredients on site.

5. Appropriate staff will be provided with information on how to recognise and treat a severe allergic reaction. Staff who interact with ākonga on a regular basis will be able to understand food allergy, recognise symptoms and know what to do in an emergency. All staff working with ākonga who suffer from severe allergies will work together to eliminate the use of food allergens in ākonga meals,educational tools, arts and crafts projects, or incentives.

6. Where appropriate ākonga should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions. To this end activities focussing on food, nutrition, health and food safety will be incorporated into teaching programmes.

7. If a total food ban is considered, this should only be implemented if requested by medical specialists as part of the ākonga management plan.

8. Wherever possible BLENNZ buildings and grounds will be maintained on a healthy indoor and outdoor quality basis. This includes e.g removing privet, silver birch trees and other plants that could cause severe allergic reactions.

## Supporting Documents:

[Link to Ministry of Primary Industries - Food Allergies](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-safety-for-consumers/food-allergies/)

[Link to Health Navigator NZ - Food Allergies](http://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/f/food-allergies/)

[Allergy NZ - Guidelines for Early Childhood Centres and Schools](https://secure.zeald.com/allergynz/A-Z%20Allergies/Guidelines%20for%20early%20childhood%20services%20and%20schools?mv_pc=3088)

[Food Standards NZ - Food Allergies](http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/consumer/foodallergies/allergies/Pages/default.aspx)

[Allergy Australia - Online Training - Anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/about-ascia/about-ascia-e-training)

[MOE Website: Student Allergy Management](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/school-high-health-needs-fund/school-high-health-needs-fund-examples/new-collapsible-item-3/#sh-allergies)

Approved: 

Date: December 2021

Next Review: 2024