# Operational Policy: Infectious Diseases (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) will take all practicable steps to ensure that ākonga, staff and visitors do not come into contact with any person (adult or child) on any of its premises who is suffering from a disease or condition likely to be passed on to others and which could have a detrimental effect on them. This includes, as part of its health and safety responsibilities, BLENNZ managing the risks associated with communicable diseases.

Nothing in this policy will override Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education requirements for managing communicable diseases. Further information is available at:

[MOE: Communicable Diseases and Legal Powers](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing/communicable-diseases-in-early-learning-services-and-schools-a-guide-to-legal-powers/#sh-communicable%20diseases%20and%20legal%20powers)

## Principles:

* The health status of ākonga should not affect their right to an education.
* Ākonga have a right to privacy.
* In dealing with any injury ākonga will be treated as if they have a blood-borne virus.
* Partnership with parents and the school community is important.

## Policy Guidelines:

1. All parents and whānau of ākonga attending BLENNZ for either long or short term programmes, and parents seeking to enrol their child in either the base school or residential will be given access to a copy of this policy.

2. The BLENNZ Homai Campus School and Residential Service, and early learning play and whānau Groups, must ensure that they maintain an immunisation register. The register must contain the following information in respect of each ākonga:

1. Their full name
2. Date of birth
3. Whether or not a caregiver has provided to the school an immunisation certificate in accordance with regulation 5 of the Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995
4. Where an immunisation certificate has been provided, the following information extracted from the certificate:
   * 1. Whether the ākonga has been fully immunised against the diseases for the time being specified in the National Immunisation Schedule
     2. If the ākonga has not been fully immunised, those diseases against which, in the vaccinator’s opinion, the ākonga has been immunised or has developed laboratory-proven natural immunity
     3. Parents are responsible for ensuring this information is kept up to date as immunity status changes.
5. Such other information as the Director-General may from time to time prescribe by notice in the Gazette.

4. Parents and staff are required to disclose to BLENNZ personal information regarding their child’s infection status in relation to any infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and COVID-19. This information will be in line with BLENNZ’s responsibilities under the Privacy Act and only those “who need to know” will be informed.

5. The information obtained will be used for two purposes:

(a) to enable BLENNZ to support ākonga by being able to notify the parents if infectious childhood diseases such as measles, chicken pox, mumps are present in their child’s learning environment and could affect their child’s health;

(b) to allow staff, “who need to know” the status of the ākonga, to act accordingly. Strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

6. All staff working with, or in contact with ākonga, will be issued with guidelines for infection control. They are to carry out these instructions with all ākonga where blood or body fluids are present.

7. All working with, or in contact with ākonga, will be instructed in the safe disposal of contaminated waste and the cleaning of spills in an approved manner.

8. Where staff members are similarly affected by infectious diseases, the same requirements apply.

## Supporting Documents:

Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008. Regulation 46, Criteria HS26-HS30.

[MOE: Communicable Diseases and Legal Powers](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing/communicable-diseases-in-early-learning-services-and-schools-a-guide-to-legal-powers/#sh-communicable%20diseases%20and%20legal%20powers)

[Oranga Tamariki Website: Children's Act Requirements](https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-act-requirements)

[Infectious Diseases - Ministry of Health website](https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/infectious-diseases)

[Link to Government Health Immunisation Regulations 1995](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1995/0304/latest/whole.html)

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