# Operational Policy: Staff Wellbeing (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) recognises the importance of ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for workers by complying with relevant health and safety legislation, standards and codes of practice. It also has a responsibility to establish, promote and maintain the wellbeing of all workers through workplace practices, and encourage workers to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, including mental health. As such BLENNZ aims to:

* Increase worker knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours
* Reduce stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace
* Facilitate workers’ active participation in a range of initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing.

## Definition:

The World Health Organisation (2014) defines mental health as “… a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.

## Responsibility:

All employees are encouraged to:

* Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
* Consider this policy while completing work related duties and at any time while representing BLENNZ
* Support colleagues in their awareness of this policy
* Support and contribute to the aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all staff.

All employees have a responsibility to:

* Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health and safety
* Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace
* Report to a member of the management team the occurrence of any issues that has put their safety in the workplace at risk
* Take their allocated breaks
* Ensure any additional hours worked over and above terms and conditions of employment as determined by either the appropriate Collective Employment Agreement or Individual Employment Agreement, do not contribute to physical, emotional and mental fatigue
* Carefully plan their workloads to ensure enough time to complete tasks
* Participate in professional development opportunities on e.g. time management, goal setting and problem solving courses/seminars.

BLENNZ management have a responsibility to:

* Ensure that all workers are made aware of this policy
* Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy including monitoring worker workloads, expectations and additional hours worked, and documenting any concerns and actions taken to support staff
* Manage the implementation and review of this policy.

## Policy Requirements:

1. All workers shall have a clearly defined job description.

2. All workers will be provided with relevant training, supervision and support as appropriate.

3. Appropriate education and life skills training will be made available in identified areas of mental health and mental health promotion.

4. Wherever possible BLENNZ will either provide, or advocate for, a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing.

5. BLENNZ will promote a culture of partnership, participation and responsiveness. Open channels of communication will foster positive working relationships and provide clear methods of conflict resolution.

6. BLENNZ will provide systems that support staff to raise issues affecting their mental health and wellbeing and where possible assist workers to develop practical solutions. This includes providing and promoting ease of access to a range of support mechanisms, including confidential counselling, for those in need of personal assistance.

7. BLENNZ will work with workers when appropriate on return to work plans. Within the constraints of individual roles BLENNZ will support predictable working hours and reasonable workloads. Flexible work practices may at times be approved, but these will also be dependent upon the constraints of a staff member’s role.

8. BLENNZ will promote and support opportunities to enhance professional development.

9. BLENNZ will encourage teaching staff to take part of their term breaks free from work related duties in order to refresh. 52 week non teaching employees will be encouraged to take their annual leave on a regular basis rather than accruing it.

10. BLENNZ will implement a system for identifying, monitoring and examining trends relating to absenteeism, sick leave, staff turnover, personal grievance, exit interviews, accident register and unused annual leave.

11. BLENNZ will ensure all workers know of the availability of EAP Services (Employee Assistance Programme) and how to access this service if required.

## Supporting Documents:

[TKI: Guidelines re Relationships and Sexuality Education](https://hpe.tki.org.nz/guidelines-and-policies/relationships-and-sexuality-education/)

[Ministry of Health: Mental Health Guidelines](http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/mental-health)

[Mental health and wellbeing definitions | Mental Health Foundation](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/index.php/resources/resource/mental-health-and-wellbeing-definitions)

[Health & Safety at Work Act 2015](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html)

[Ministry of Education website - Managing Traumatic Incidents](http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies/)

[World Health Organisation: Mental Health Key Terms and Definitions](http://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/mental-health/key-terms-and-definitions-in-mental-health)

[Website link for Employee Assistance Programme](http://www.eapservices.co.nz/)

[ACC Legislation](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM99494.html)

## BLENNZ policies:

* Induction
* EEO
* Working from Home and Staff Ākonga in the Workplace
* Succession Planning
* Sexual Harassment
* Workplace Bullying and Harassment
* Traumatic Incidents
* Protected Disclosures
* Specialist/Therapist Workload Management
* Health and Safety
* Environmental Best Practice

Approved: 

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Next Review: 2026