# Operational Policy: Work Experience Policy for Ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind & Low Vision (NAG 1)

## Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

BLENNZ is committed to providing ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision who attend the Homai Campus School and Transition programmes with equitable opportunities for work experience to enhance their career development and foster their independence. This policy aims to ensure that ākonga have access to meaningful work experience placements that accommodate their specific needs, promote inclusivity, and support their professional growth.

### Objective:

The objective of this policy is to establish guidelines for the provision of work experience opportunities for ākonga at BLENNZ. This policy aims to ensure that ākonga have equitable opportunities to engage in meaningful workplace experiences. Develop employability skills, and explore career pathways and must be linked to the educational programme of the ākonga.

This policy applies to all ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision enrolled in BLENNZ programs who are eligible and interested in participating in work experience placements.

Work experience can be paid or be voluntary and unpaid. It should be for no more than 15 hours per week. No more than five of these hours are permitted to be within normal school hours, i.e. one school day.

### Accessible Work Experience Placements:

1.1 Identification and Assessment:

1. BLENNZ will collaborate with the ākonga, their whānau, and relevant staff members to identify suitable work experience placements that align with the interests and goals of ākonga
   1. A Work Experience Agreement will be created and signed by the employer, BLENNZ and the ākonga.
2. A thorough assessment will be conducted to ensure that the work experience placement can accommodate the specific needs of the ākonga, including accessibility requirements and necessary support.
3. Provide necessary accommodations and support services to ensure equitable access and participation for ākonga.
4. Monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of work experience placements for ākonga.

1.2 Inclusive Environment:

1. Employers hosting work experience placements are expected to provide an inclusive environment that respects and supports the needs of ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision.
2. Employers will be encouraged to make reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility, such as providing assistive technology, adjusting lighting, modifying workstations, or providing accessible materials.

### Roles and Responsibilities:

2.1 BLENNZ:

1. BLENNZ will collaborate with ākonga, their whānau, and employers to identify suitable work experience opportunities.
2. BLENNZ will provide ongoing support and guidance to ākonga throughout the work experience placement, including orientation and mobility training, assistive technology training, and any necessary accommodations.
3. BLENNZ will maintain regular communication with the employer to ensure the progress of ākonga and address any concerns or challenges that may arise.
4. No financial costs related to work experience are to be imposed on ākonga undertaking voluntary work experience.

2.2 Employers:

1. Employers hosting work experience placements will ensure an inclusive and accessible environment for ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision.
2. Employers will provide appropriate orientation and training to familiarise the ākonga with the workplace and its procedures.
3. Employers will collaborate with BLENNZ to identify and implement necessary accommodations and assistive technology to support the participation of ākonga.
4. Employers will communicate openly with BLENNZ regarding the progress, challenges, and any additional support required by the ākonga.

2.3 Ākonga:

1. Ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision will actively participate in identifying their interests, goals, and preferred work experience placements. All ākonga, as workers, are obliged to:
   1. take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
   2. take reasonable care that what they do or don’t do doesn’t adversely affect the health and safety of others;
   3. cooperate with any reasonable policies or procedures the business or undertaking has in place on how to work in a safe and healthy way; and
   4. comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU so that they can comply with the HSWA and the regulations.
2. Ākonga will communicate their needs, preferences, and any necessary accommodations to BLENNZ and their employers.
3. Ākonga will adhere to the workplace policies, procedures, and expectations during their work experience placements.
4. Ākonga will attend scheduled work experience placements punctually and be reliable throughout the duration. Absenteeism will be followed up in the normal manner.
5. Ākonga will seek guidance from the school if any issues or concerns arise during the placement.

### Monitoring and Evaluation:

BLENNZ will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work experience program for ākonga who are Blind, Deafblind and Low Vision. Feedback from ākonga, whānau, and employers will be collected to continually improve the program's accessibility, inclusivity, and outcomes.

### Eligibility and Duration

1. Work experience placements are available to ākonga in the Transition programme at the BLENNZ Homai Campus in Manurewa.
2. Work experience placements are available to ākonga in the James Cook Satellite classes of the BLENNZ Homai Campus in Manurewa.
3. The duration of work experience may vary, but it is typically recommended for between 4-6 weeks.

### Confidentiality:

All information shared during the work experience placement, including personal and medical details, will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and handled in accordance with privacy regulations.

### Related Policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

* Board of Trustees Policy: Child Protection (NAG 5)
* Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (NAG 5)

## Supporting Documents:

[Ministry of Education: Students on Work Experience](https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/SES-Students-on-Work-Experience-HS.PDF)

[NZ Government Website: Careers](https://www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/get-ideas-for-your-career/work-experience-options/#cID_8018)

[Ministry of Education: Administration and Roll Return Information](https://youthguarantee.education.govt.nz/initiatives/opportunities-at-school-and-beyond/trades-academies/supplementary-roll-returns-guidance/)

Approved: 

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Next Review: 2026