# Operational Policy: Handling and Transfer of Ākonga (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 requires employers to take all practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of employees and others at work. To meet its legal responsibilities the Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) aims to create an environment where staff are trained, equipped, supported and encouraged to manage ākonga handling tasks in a way that reduces the risk of injury to themselves and others.

This policy covers all staff within BLENNZ who are working with ākonga of all ages and in all programmes or activities and locations.

Staff working in sites not associated with BLENNZ should be guided by the protocols of the relevant educational placement.

## Policy Requirements:

### Homai Campus Protocols:

1. BLENNZ staff will follow the ACC and MOE “Liten Up” approach when working with all ākonga. This will ensure safety procedures are in place to minimise risks to ākonga or staff during handling or positioning transfers.

2. Staff working with ākonga who require support to transfer between positions will be trained by accredited trainers in the correct lifting and transfer techniques in accordance with ACC guidelines as soon as possible after taking up employment with BLENNZ.

3. Until training has been satisfactorily completed, staff will only transfer or use mechanical lift equipment (e.g. hoists) with ākonga under the close supervision of a trained staff member.

4. BLENNZ will provide the equipment needed for safe transfer of ākonga on the Homai Campus and ensure appropriate staff are trained in the safe use and maintenance of the equipment. BLENNZ will establish processes to identify needs and to trial and select the appropriate equipment. It will also budget on an annual basis to ensure that all equipment is repaired, maintained and replaced as required.

5. All ākonga attending the Homai Campus who require mechanical lifting or assisted transfers will be assessed by the appropriate therapist, in consultation with the IP (Individual Plan) team, and a Handling Plan developed during the transition process prior to enrolment, or as soon as possible as ākonga approach the identified weight threshold. This plan will be reviewed annually or as required should the weight or physical development of the ākonga change. The mechanical lift or transfer designation given to each ākonga is to be documented in their file and a copy clearly displayed in their educational placement.

6. For ākonga attending National Assessment or Immersion courses, information on transfer processes will be sought from parents and/or the educational placement.

7. Staff must not transfer ākonga without using assistive equipment unless there is a clear mandate for the specific technique assigned to the ākonga in the Handling Plan.

8. All staff working with ākonga must be familiar with the contents of the individual Handling Plans.

9. Where ākonga handling and positional transfer is part of the regular duties and the employee is unable to carry out that part of their duties, the appropriate Senior Manager will investigate the cause for the employee not being able to carry out their normal duties. In the event that it is determined that there is a new physical cause e.g. injury, or a presenting case (which indicates an underlying cause), continued employment will be reviewed and a transfer to other duties or other appropriate action may be required. BLENNZ will consult with the employee at all times throughout the review and the employee shall provide BLENNZ with all information pertaining to their condition as required to assist in the review process. Any review must take into consideration the terms and conditions of the respective Collective Employment Agreement.

### Off Campus Protocols:

1. Staff working with ākonga off campus must request either a copy of the Handling Plan from either the relevant educational placement or the families concerned or ensure another staff member is present who is trained in the safe handling of the ākonga.

2. Handling and transfer of ākonga off campus is the responsibility of the educational placement or family. Assistance can be provided, but this must be under supervision and follow the guidelines outlined in the plan.

### General:

1. An injury to a staff member while handling or transferring ākonga will be deemed to be a work related accident. Such injuries will be investigated and wherever possible steps taken to prevent a similar situation reoccurring. Work Safe NZ notification will take place as soon as possible and a written record kept of the investigation.

2. This policy must be read in conjunction with the BLENNZ Child Protection Policy.

## Supporting Documents:

[Link to ACC-OSH "Liten Up"](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&channel=trow&ei=-AJSXYGsMoScvQT3wYzgAg&q=acc+safe+liten+up&oq=acc+safe+liten+up&gs_l=psy-ab.3..33i160l3.9798.13240..14208...0.0..0.227.1643.0j3j5......0....1..gws-wiz.......0i71j0j0i22i30j33i21..11%3A1j12%3A4j13%3A0.mgVW0WMVJW4&ved=0ahUKEwiBiOWuyv7jAhUETo8KHfcgAywQ4dUDCAo&uact=5)

BLENNZ Child Protection Policy

Approved: 

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Next Review: 2025