# Operational Policy: Health & Safety Worker Engagement and Participation (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) has a responsibility to ensure all workers\*\* have a reasonable opportunity to be actively involved in the ongoing management of health and safety.

As part of BLENNZ’s commitment to promote and maintain a safe and healthy working environment, opportunities to engage in health and safety training or activities will be provided for all workers. More indepth training in specific areas of health and safety will be provided to appropriate staff.

\*\* “Worker” relates to all BLENNZ staff and volunteers

## Policy Requirements:

Any health and safety issue that concerns a worker must be raised with either that worker’s immediate line manager or their elected health and safety representative (HSR). If the matter cannot be resolved by the line manager to the worker’s satisfaction, the matter will be raised with the appropriate Senior Manager and/or Principal.

Operational matters, including workload or work process, should be raised with the relevant manager as appropriate.

Health and safety matters relating to buildings should be raised with the appropriate Senior Manager and where appropriate placed on the BLENNZ Health and Safety Risk Register. After discussion with the Senior Manager, building issues relating to Visual Resource Centres will be raised with host schools.

Policy concerns should be raised with the board, through the Principal.

### Health & Safety Representatives

1. The BLENNZ Health & Safety Committee will have two elected worker health & safety representatives (HSR): one elected representative from workers based at and working from Visual Resource Centres (including Auckland South VRC) and the other being one elected representative from workers based at and working on the Homai Campus inclusive of all departments but excluding the Auckland South VRC. The role of the HSR is to:

* Represent workers in matters relating to health and safety.
* Investigate complaints from workers regarding health and safety.
* If requested by a worker, to represent them in relation to a matter relating to health and safety (including a complaint).
* Monitor the measures taken by the Board (through the Principal) that are relevant to health and safety.
* Inquire into anything that appears to be a risk to the health and safety of workers arising from the conduct of BLENNZ.
* Make recommendations relating to work health and safety.
* Provide feedback to the Board (through the Principal) about whether the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and Regulations are being complied with.
* Promote the interests of workers who have been harmed at work, including in relation to arrangements for rehabilitation and return to work.

2. Elections for HSR will be held triennially, or as required in the event of a HSR vacating their role.

3. All workers will have the opportunity to nominate and elect their respective HSR.

4. Elections will be undertaken using the most appropriate form of voting as determined by the Principal.

5. All newly elected HSRs must complete initial training. Initial training is considered completed when the HSR is assessed as having achieved the NZQA Unit Standard 29315.

6. HSRs will register for appropriate health and safety training in the first two months after becoming a HSR. Each HSR may undertake further training as courses become available and budget constraints permit.

### Health & Safety Committee

The purpose of the committee is to:

1. Encourage co-operation and collaboration in meeting BLENNZ health and safety objectives.

2. Ensure there is a consistent, co-ordinated approach to health and safety on all BLENNZ sites.

3. Provide accurate and timely information and advice to management and workers relevant to the specific event and context.

4. Ensure there is a systematic process for managing risk.

5. Ensure effective monitoring and review systems are in place.

6. To take unresolved issues to the relevant member of BLENNZ leadership.

7. Wherever possible and practical, to represent all workers including management working at any BLENNZ site.

### Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

BLENNZ recognises a worker may cease or refuse to carry out work if the worker believes carrying out the work would expose them, or any other person, to a serious risk to their or the other person’s health and safety arising from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard. In this event the following steps will be taken:

1. The worker will advise their relevant line manager immediately. The line manager will immediately notify their respective Senior Manager.

2. The worker and management will attempt to resolve the matter as soon as practicable.

3. If the matter is not resolved the worker may continue to refuse to carry out the work, if the worker believes on reasonable grounds that carrying out the work would expose them, or any other person, to a serious risk to their or the other person’s health or safety arising from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.

4. If the matter cannot be resolved, WorkSafe NZ will be contacted.

5. The worker will perform any other work BLENNZ reasonably requests within the scope of their employment agreement.

### Provisional Improvement Notices

A health and safety representative who has received the appropriate training may issue a provisional improvement notice (notice) to a person if the HSR reasonably believes that the person is contravening, or is likely to contravene, a provision of the Act or Regulations. The notice may require the person to:

1. Remedy the contravention.

2. Prevent a likely contravention from occurring.

3. Remedy the things or activities causing the contravention or likely to cause a contravention.

The HSR must not issue a notice to a person unless they have first consulted the person.

The HSR must not issue a notice if a Health & Safety Inspector has already issued a notice in relation to the same matter. If a notice is issued, the HSR must provide a copy of that notice to the appropriate Senior Manager and Principal as soon as practicable.

## Supporting Documents:

[MOE: Information for Schools on Health and Safety Requirements](https://www.education.govt.nz/communities-of-learning/building/health-and-safety/#sh-health%20and%20safety)

[Ministry of Education website - Information on Health & Safety in Schools and Early Childhood Centres](http://www.education.govt.nz/search/SearchForm?Search=health+and+safety&action_results=Go)

[Website link to Health & Safety in Employment Act 2015](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html)

BLENNZ Policy Manual

BLENNZ Health & Safety Manual

Personal Safety Principles and Guidelines: Handbook for MOE Staff

Approved: 

Date: 1 July 2023

Next Review: 2026