



Guide for NZ Home Education Groups

Produced for the benefit of all NZ home educators by the National Council of Home Educators NZ
For corrections and feedback please email info@nchenz.org.nz

www.nchenz.org.nz

May 2016

Disclaimer: The information contained in this guide is for general information purposes only. The information is provided by the National Council of Home Educators NZ and, while we endeavour to keep the information up-to-date and correct, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, or suitability of the information for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk. We recommend you undertake your own due diligence.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Setting Up Your Group	4
Types of Groups	4
Informal or Formal?	6
Group Purpose and Core Values	8
Group Name	8
Operations Statement	8
Security of Information	9
Group Rules or Constitution	9
Operation of the Group	10
Group Roles.....	10
Regular Meetings	11
Annual General Meetings.....	11
Decision Making	12
Communicating with Members	12
Growing the Group.....	14
New Members	14
Website.....	14
Hiring a Venue	14
Finance	16
Bank Account.....	16
Playgroup Funding	16
Grants	16
Running Events, Workshops & Classes	17
The Group as the Organiser	18
The Individual as the Organiser	19
Behaviour Expectations.....	20
Troubleshooting	21
Complaints Policy	21
Disciplinary Procedure	21
Appendix 1: Example of Constitution.....	22
Appendix 2: Example of Social Media Policy	34
Appendix 3: Activity Planning Forms	36
Appendix 4: Example of Complaints Policy.....	41

Introduction

Having a community for support, fun, organised activities, and friendships is so important when home educating. Many home educators report that having a like-minded community has made the greatest difference in their home education journey. Most regions of NZ have some type of social group whether it is a large regional group, smaller local group, or a collection of families who get together regularly. Groups are set up for a variety of purposes and to meet a range of needs.

This guide has been compiled by the National Council of Home Educators New Zealand (NCHENZ). To find out more about NCHENZ see our website (www.nchenz.org.nz).

Groups meet all kinds of needs. Some are fully inclusive, some have a particular ideology, some are for home educators who follow a specific educational method or philosophy. Creating a national networking group is quite a different process than creating a local support group. A national group will rely heavily on social media to connect, whereas a local group may find that they only occasionally connect online and that the face-to-face interactions are central to the group. This guide offers some best practice ideas for anyone who is planning to set up a local/regional support group or for those who are already operating a group. These suggestions have come from successful and long-standing regional and local groups in New Zealand.

If you have unsuccessfully tried to find a group in your area that meets your needs, consider starting your own group. The chances are that you are not the only one looking. Practically all of the local and regional groups started small, with a few families and a shared goal. Post a notice on the home education group message boards - Facebook, Yahoo Groups, or through NCHENZ - and see who else is keen to join you. It can also be a good idea to put notices up at places such as the library, supermarket, community noticeboards, etc. For a list of current groups - both national online networking groups and local support groups – please see the NCHENZ website (www.nchenz.org.nz) which has an interactive map showing support groups all over NZ. If you have an existing group which is not on the list on the NCHENZ website, let us know and we'll add your group.

NCHENZ is grateful to the people and groups who have provided input into this guide, specifically: Canterbury Home Educators, Manawatu Home Educators, and Child-Led Learning Playgroup.

Setting Up Your Group

Types of Groups

Groups vary depending on whether they have an informal or formal operating structure. The benefits of a more formal arrangement is that the group stands alone from individual members and can therefore be more enduring, and that the group can apply for grants and other funds to operate. The disadvantage of a more formal structure is that there is more administration and paperwork, and there are specific rules that must be followed such as registration with the Societies & Trusts branch of the Companies Office NZ.

The benefits of being an informal group are the looser rules around operating, less structure and less 'red tape'. The disadvantages are that groups can fold relatively easily depending on who is driving the group, and one or two people can determine the whole direction of the group which may not be what the majority want.

Looking at the types of groups currently operating in NZ, they tend to fall into one of these categories:

Informal Email Loop:

- Self-organising, any member can post notices and communicate with the group
- Often quite fluid in terms of activity - sometimes lots going on, other times reasonably stagnant
- Focus is on providing information to the group so that subscribers can get-together for activities of interest
- No bank account
- No official structure
- No membership fees
- Administration of email loop may be passed to others but it's easy to manage as requires little input on day-to-day basis
- Group size can be small to large

Coordinator-Run:

- Single person or small leadership team coordinates communication
- May be difficult to communicate with the group unless directly via the coordinator
- Usually no bank account
- No official structure
- Coordinator determines who can join or not
- No membership fees or operating documentation
- Group culture and atmosphere depends entirely on the coordinator
- Group would disband if coordinator decided to stop running things
- Group size is usually quite small

Co-operative Group:

- Usually a small core of people operate the group with a specific purpose or community in mind
- Regular meetings determine group direction based upon consensus and cooperation
- Focus is on working together to meet the needs of the group and run activities
- May be a bank account
- No official structure
- May be small membership fee
- Members may join at discretion of current members
- Group culture and atmosphere depends entirely on current members
- Group may endure if individual families leave but could disband if a large number of families leave
- Group size is small (eg. ten families or less)

Incorporated Society:

- Formal group with specific aims and objectives
- Formal structure involving members and an executive committee which meets regularly
- Annual membership fee or some other form of incoming funds such as grants
- Must have a bank account
- Must be registered with the Incorporated Societies branch of the Companies Office
- Can be tax exempt
- Can apply for some grants
- Is a legal entity separate from any particular member and therefore long lasting
- Sub-committees might form to organise larger events for members
- Group culture and atmosphere determined by the executive committee
- Group size must be at least 15 to form an incorporated society but is usually much larger

Charitable Organisation:

- Formal group set up to promote education (or under one of the other categories charitable trusts must fall into)
- Formal structure involving members and a committee which meets regularly
- Annual membership fee or some other form of incoming funds such as grants
- Develops policies and plans to support members
- Must have a bank account
- Must be registered with the Charities Commission
- Can be tax exempt
- Able to apply for grants
- Required to have audited annual reports
- Is a legal entity separate from any particular member and therefore long lasting
- Sub-committees might form to organise larger events for members
- Group culture and atmosphere determined largely by committee members
- Group size must be at least two to form a trust but is usually much larger

Informal or Formal?

Your group can simply be an informal collection of families, or you can set up a legal entity of some sort. If you want your group to have legal status, your options are to either register as a trust with the Charities Commission, or become an incorporated society. Some will enjoy the flexibility involved in running an informal group, whereas others will want the longevity and security of a group which is a separate legal entity.

What is an Incorporated Society?

Any group of 15 or more people can apply to become incorporated. An incorporated society is a group registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 which is then authorised by law to run its affairs as though it were an individual person. Who can be a member of the incorporated society is determined by the rules of the group (the Constitution). The members are not personally liable for the group's debts, contracts or other obligations. Members do not have any personal interest in any property or assets owned by the group. A group which is an incorporated society would continue to exist as long as certain documents were filed with the Registrar of Incorporated Societies (or until the group was wound up).

To become an incorporated society, a group must:

- Prepare a set of rules for the society (eg. a Constitution)
- Choose a group name, it will end with the word "Incorporated"
- Have a meeting of members where the rules are approved, a formal resolution is made to incorporate, and group roles are assigned
- Choose an address for the "registered office" of the group
- Submit the application form signed by 15 members
- Pay the relevant fee

An incorporated society cannot make money (profits) to distribute to members. It can raise money for functions of the society (eg. to run an event or activity), but it cannot raise money for members to use as their own. An incorporated society must have a specific purpose for being established and all activity of the group must fall within the objectives of the society - this would all be outlined in the Constitution (see Appendix 1 for an example of a Constitution). A committee is accountable to members for the running of the incorporated society. Annual auditing of financial accounts is not compulsory but might be done at the end of each financial year.

After being incorporated, your group will need to buy a common seal (a stamp for use on legal documents). It costs about \$100 or so to register an incorporated society. After the set up fees there are not many costs associated with remaining incorporated.

What is a Charitable Trust?

While an incorporated society *may* have a charitable purpose, a charitable trust *must* have a charitable purpose – the promotion of education is considered a charitable purpose and therefore some NZ home education groups are set up as charitable trusts.

This type of group is a trust, so therefore it is set up by someone who 'settles' some money or other assets into the trust (the Settlor) or by someone who has died and left instructions to set up the trust (the Testator). A trust is run by Trustees for the benefit of Beneficiaries. There must be at least two Trustees at all times. A trust can operate in almost exactly the same way as an individual person - it can buy property, raise mortgages, have bank accounts and generally hold all types of assets and investments as long as it operates according to the powers set out in the Trust Deed. A charitable trust is registered under the Charitable Trust Act 1957.

A registered charitable trust will need to have a Trust Deed drawn up by a solicitor. The group will require a registered office and a name (which has not been used by another trust in NZ). They may also have a Constitution to cover the day-to-day operation of the group.

To become a charitable trust, a group must:

- Meet with a solicitor to check that a charitable trust is the most appropriate entity for the group and discuss the set up of the trust, etc
- Choose a group name
- Have a solicitor prepare a Trust Deed
- Prepare a Statutory Declaration signed by at least one of the Trustees
- Submit the application form signed by the Trustees

Charitable trusts can apply to be tax exempt. A charitable trust may make profits on their activities but the profits must be used for their charitable purposes and cannot be distributed to members. Annual auditing of financial accounts is required.

It is free to set up a charitable trust and there are no ongoing costs to remain registered.

Incorporated Society or Charitable Trust – which is better?

This is difficult to answer without knowing a lot more details about your specific group, its purpose, what functions it will undertake, etc. The better question might first be ... Informal or Formal structure? If you decide a formal structure will be ideal for your particular group, it is probably wise to get professional advice to discuss which type of formal structure will best suit the group's needs going forward.

Group Purpose and Core Values

It is a valuable exercise for a new or existing group to clarify the purpose and core values of the group. The purpose is simply the group's 'reason for being' - what's the point of the group? Core values are the fundamental beliefs the group holds - the guiding principles that are at the heart of the group. Core values remain steadfast even when other aspects of the group change, such as the venue for group gatherings or the people who are committee members. Core values don't change over time because they are at the very heart of the group. The group purpose and core values also allow potential members to quickly and easily see if the group fits with their own personal goals and values.

A formal group, such as a charitable trust or incorporated society, is likely to have this information outlined in the group's Constitution.

Group Name

Having a reasonably simple, straight-forward group name allows potential members to easily identify the purpose and membership of the group. The group name can be hard to determine - which is why it can be useful to work out the group purpose and core values first.

It can save issues down the track if the group has an email separate from any particular member, such as a group gmail account. The emails can be forwarded to the member who handles correspondence, or the email account could be checked every few days. This ensures that it will be easy to change who is managing emails if members leave the group.

Operations Statement

The operations statement is a succinct document that is given to potential members and contains key information about the group so that people can decide if they want to join or not. For example, the operations statement might cover:

- The purpose of the group and the core values
- Who holds any particular position in the group, such as the coordinator or committee members
- Group contact details and contact details for key members
- Method that the organising team communicates with members
- How members are expected to behave
- When meetings are held and where
- What a commitment to the group involves (eg. volunteer hours, fees, etc)
- Any group rules
- How disputes are handled
- Any other relevant information

The operations statement might be a pamphlet, A4 piece of paper, or a document several pages long - it depends on the complexity of the group and how much needs to be explained to potential members so that they can make an informed decision about joining. A formal group, such as a charitable trust or incorporated society, is likely to have this information outlined in the group's Constitution.

Security of Information

Many groups will require members to fill in and submit a membership form. This may include details such as name, address, email address, telephone number, names and ages of children, etc. If you collect this type of information then your group will need to address the security of the information - where and how will it be stored so that it is kept private? You will also need permission if you want to share member information, such as a members contact list. Some things to consider:

- How will you ensure other members don't misuse this information?
- What will you do if there is an instance of misuse?
- Has every member given you permission to share their personal details, and is there a clear process for them to opt-out?

Group Rules or Constitution

More formal groups should have a Constitution (and Incorporated Societies/Charitable Trusts *must* have a Constitution or something similar). This document sets out the group objectives and all of the rules for operating the group, how often meetings should be held, how membership is approved, who can serve on the committee, etc. The complaints policy and disciplinary process would also be covered in the Constitution. See Appendix 1 for an example of a Constitution - this is the NCHENZ Constitution which governs how NCHENZ is run. As the Constitution is a foundation document, it is worthwhile getting legal advice in formulating it and the taking the time to get it correct.

Operation of the Group

Group Roles

Some groups are entirely unstructured and just tick over quite nicely. The bigger a group gets, or the more active it becomes, often the more structure is required in order to operate efficiently and avoid issues. Large groups will usually be headed by a committee which makes decisions on behalf of the wider membership. Many groups have the following positions or group roles:

- Coordinator or Administrator
- Treasurer (if money is handled or if there is a bank account)
- Correspondence Secretary (if there is a group email account or if mail is received)
- Minutes Secretary (to take minutes at committee meetings)
- Web Administrator (if the group has a website)
- Grants or Fundraising Team (if the group is able to apply for grants or has regular fundraising activities)
- Information Officer or Membership Secretary (to help induct and provide information to new members, and to manage the membership database/list)
- Health & Safety Officer (if the group hires a regular venue, and particularly if they receive playgroup funding and have to meet health and safety regulations)
- Activities Coordinator (if the group runs regular events, workshops and activities)
- Social Media Person (if the group has a presence on Facebook or uses social media)
- "General" committee members (to organise one-off events such as an annual Christmas party or market day)

As a group gets bigger, so does the workload. How to attract members to fill group roles is always a key part of operating a group. Seldom do groups have the funds to have paid positions, so group roles are almost always on a volunteer basis. Lots of people enjoy contributing and doing volunteer work - supporting these people is essential as without them the group would probably fold. So what makes people volunteer when there is no monetary reward? Appreciation, respect, contributing to others, creating opportunities for their own children ... Take every opportunity to acknowledge individual volunteers and to let the wider membership know how hard the volunteers work.

It's important that volunteers are protected from harassment by other group members. This is rare but can happen. It's also important that volunteers are appropriately supported in their management of activities and events, so that they aren't discouraged from stepping forward.

Regular Meetings

Many groups will need to have regular meetings, particularly more formal groups. Meetings may be held at a member's home, a café or public venue, or using telecommunications technology. Most groups would meet at least once every month or two, but it will depend on the purpose of the group. Minutes should be kept as a record of what was resolved at the meeting. Basic minutes need only include:

- Date, time and location of meeting
- Names of those present
- A review of the minutes from the previous meeting (whenever it was held), and any corrections noted
- Reports from specific people within the group, such as the coordinator, secretary, treasurer, etc
- Any decisions made
- Date and time of the next meeting

Meetings are usually run by the main coordinator or administrator, however sometimes in cooperatives the chairing of the meeting is shared.

The formatting of the minutes, or even having them typed up rather than hand written, is less important than recording the information from the meetings. Minutes should be kept for the life of the group, either printed and filed in an appropriate folder or kept in secure online storage (or both!).

Annual General Meetings

Incorporated societies and charitable trusts must hold a yearly meeting called an Annual General Meeting (AGM), which all members are invited to and encouraged to attend. Other groups may also choose to do this. The AGM is where office holders are elected or appointed (coordinator, secretary, treasurer, etc), financial accounts for the year are approved, and other annual business is reviewed such as who holds a key to the venue or who are the signatories on the bank account.

The minutes from the AGM are lodged with the Societies & Trusts Office (which is where incorporated societies and charitable trusts are registered), and are a key requirement for operating a trust or society.

Decision Making

There are a couple of key methods for making decisions in groups.

Committee

In a large group a core sub-group of members (the committee) may be elected to make the decisions for the group. The committee would be trusted to make decisions for the benefit of the wider group, and might meet monthly or quarterly (depending on the group) to pass resolutions (make decisions).

A quorum is the minimum number of committee members required at a meeting in order to make decisions. If a committee has, say, ten members - the quorum might be six, which means that there must be at least six committee members at the meeting so that decisions can be made. If, in this case, there were less than six, then the meeting could go ahead as a general discussion but no decisions could be passed. The quorum number is one of the things set out in the group rules or constitution, and is updated at the Annual General Meeting for the group.

A committee must accurately record the minutes from the meeting so that other group members know what was discussed and decided upon.

Consensus

Some groups use consensus decision-making where every member has an equal voice and every view is valued. Often in these types of groups the decision-making process is as important as the end decision itself. Usually one person is appointed to facilitate decision-making and guide the group along.

If you are using consensus decision-making for your group, it's worthwhile documenting what will happen if no consensus is reached. For example, some groups will bring in a mediator if consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached; others might agree that they will aim for consensus but if it can't be reached after sufficient efforts then an 80% majority agreement is enough.

Communicating with Members

One of the main decisions a group will face early on, is how to communicate with members. There may be particular barriers to communicating with members depending on the type of group, location, and purpose. Some issues could be:

- Members who do not have IT knowledge or good internet access in order to receive group information

- Members who are not comfortable joining Facebook or Yahoo Groups, or some other social media, due to privacy concerns
- Too many emails from a range of group members
- Emails that are not relevant, with no ability for members to opt-out of receiving particular types of emails
- Concerns about security of personal member information

A large group may have a policy in place for how membership information can be accessed and used, whereas a smaller group may discuss this at a meeting and minute the decision.

If your group is planning to use social media to communicate (eg. Facebook) it's very important to have a written set of rules for users. This is called a social media policy and it might cover:

- The aim of the policy and who the policy is for
- Who in the group is responsible for the management of the social media forum
- Who can join and how membership requests will be handled
- What is expected of members when they post or comment in the forum
- What type of discussion is permitted in the forum, and what type of discussion is not permitted
- Whether photos can be uploaded and what types of photos can be uploaded
- What can be shared outside of the forum and how personal details are to be protected
- What will happen if there is a breach of the rules, and what the termination process is for a member who repeatedly breaches the rules

The written policy should be easily available for all members on the forum.

See Appendix 2 for the NCHENZ Social Media Policy and please feel free to use this to create your own.

Growing the Group

New Members

At some stage your group will need to consider how new members will be attracted and inducted. If your group is quite small and close-knit, new members can find it hard to 'break-in' to the fold so it's important to make new people feel welcome. One of the biggest complaints from home educators about the first group activity they went to is that no one talked to them, that it was "cliquey" or that they felt unwelcome.

Ideas for inducting new members:

- Assign an existing member as a "buddy" to help them find their way around and to introduce them to other group members
- Mark off a checklist of things they need to know about the group, such as where the group library is kept or how to pay their membership fees
- Welcome them formally at the next group meeting

Website

As your group grows, and especially if you want to attract new members, it may be a good idea to develop a website. This might be where information about the group is found (including the purpose of the group, how it operates, etc), and could have a Members Only area where members can share ideas, information and photos. Even if you use a free web development program and your website can be developed by an existing member, there may be costs to consider such as a domain name, hosting fees, etc.

To check out some existing group websites, go to the NCHENZ website and look under the Support menu at the websites of some regional groups.

Hiring a Venue

A small collection of a few families may just get-together by rotating around the homes each week. Or they may not get together socially much at all, but the group purpose may be to organise and attend planned workshops each month. In some cases your group may require a regular venue for gatherings/activities. Most local councils have a list of halls or facilities that can be hired. It is also worth approaching Playcentres, Plunket, and community centres.

Hiring a venue does not need to be complicated, however there are some things to consider such as:

- Insurance
- Health and safety
- Distance for playgroup families to travel
- Indoor space on rainy days
- Older children's activities or younger children's activities (particularly if the space caters mostly to specific ages)
- Rent costs and how to pay for the venue
- A written hire contract
- A single liaison point for the venue coordinator
- Storage of group resources
- Cleaning of the venue or hiring a cleaner
- Accountability for the venue chattels and resources

Finance

Bank Account

If a group handles money then it's important that decisions about finances are completely transparent - decisions should be made at meetings and recorded in the minutes. A bank account should always have at least two (unrelated) signatories. Usually it's free to set up a bank account for a non-profit organisation, but this completely depends on the bank. Shop around for a good deal.

Playgroup Funding

Many home education playgroups receive Ministry of Education ECE funding for their under-6s. Just like any other Early Childhood Education playgroup, it is not relevant that older children (over 6s) attend - although funding will only be received for the under 6s. Playgroups are supported by the Ministry of Education and have to meet certain criteria, however the criteria is not as strict as for early childhood education centres or Playcentres.

Playgroup funding is approximately \$1.50 per under 6 year old, per hour. The playgroup must have a regular venue. To receive funding the playgroup needs to become "certificated" - this involves meeting specific criteria and being assessed by a Ministry of Education staff member. Once the assessment is completed and approved, the certification is valid for three years as long as the playgroup remains in the same venue. There is a small amount of paperwork involved for certificated playgroups, including membership forms for attendees, health and safety documentation, policies and procedures, etc - however once set up it is all quite straight-forward to maintain. Certificated playgroups can apply for grants from the Ministry of Education for one-off set up costs such as large pieces of equipment or bulk resources.

Grants

Many grants - such as community development funds, lottery grants, or funds from gaming machines - can only be accessed by legal entity groups (incorporated societies or charitable trusts). However, some grants allow any non-profit group to apply.

The criteria for grants changes regularly so it is not viable to print a list here. Do an internet search for grants to find what is available at the time of application. Each grant tends to have different application guidelines, due dates, items the grant can cover and items the grant won't cover, etc. Every grant also has specific accountability expectations, including receipting, reporting back to the organisation, and other methods for ensuring the money is spent according to the approved application.

Running Events, Workshops & Classes

Most groups have the provision of events and activities for members as their core purpose, and in fact some groups will have an official Activities Coordinator role to ensure events are run regularly and smoothly.

The role of the person organising an activity usually includes these aspects:

- Liaise with the venue and instructors
- Set the cost for attendees
- Keep a list of the correspondence regarding the activity (eg. venue booking sheets, attendees, instructor contact details, health and safety considerations, etc)
- Get together the necessary equipment and resources for the activity
- Provide information to attendees about location and parking
- Inform parents whether they need to stay with their children, can drop-off their children, or whether they are not permitted to stay/drop-off; and what facilities there are for younger children not involved in the activity if any
- Arrive early to set-up and deal with attendees/payments
- Provide a debrief of the activity to the group

A number of things need to be considered when planning an activity or event for group members:

- Who will have responsibility for organising activities? Will this responsibility fall to one person or can anyone in your group come up with an idea for an activity and organise it?
- Are there limits in terms of what type of events or activities your group will run or will not run? This will relate to the work done in establishing the group - the group values, purpose and membership.
- How will you ensure that activities do not clash? One regional group keeps a calendar of events in a central location (online) so that there are no date clashes with activities run by different members.
- Who has responsibility for deciding whether a particular event or activity can fall under the umbrella of the group? If these decisions have to go to a group meeting, will that cause unnecessary delays in organising activities?
- What will happen if there is a shortfall of funds for an activity or event? Will the money come out of the group finances? How can a shortfall of funds be avoided?
- How will members be notified of group activities or events? This will be determined by your main method of communicating with members. Many of the larger groups email a list of what's available for the term to members at the beginning of each term, identifying the contact person for the activity and how to enrol.
- Most activities have a limit to numbers, how will this be handled ... is it on a first come basis? Or some other method for determining enrolments such as a

requirement to enrol and make payment immediately? What will happen if someone enrolls but pulls out of the activity, will they get a refund?

- Who will have the final say regarding how the activity is run if there are disagreements or issues? Who will decide about changes to the way the activity is run?
- What type of behaviour is expected from adults and children in attendance, and how will issues regarding behaviour be handled?

There are two main ways to run events - the group itself organises it, pays for it, and takes full responsibility; or individual members run activities they each initiate and volunteer for, coming under the main group umbrella (but the group itself does not take responsibility for the activity).

The Group as the Organiser

Advantages:

- Able to run bigger events with higher costs and larger numbers of people
- Activities are run for the benefit of all and are perhaps more inclusive
- Able to provide receipts to attendees for payments
- Activity evaluations can be performed in order to improve the running of activities over time
- Able to use group funds to make advance payments rather than wait for all payments from attendees to come in first
- Can build up a good rapport over time with activity suppliers/venues and develop a good name for the group with venues, hosts, etc

Disadvantages:

- There is more financial accountability - so a fair amount of administration is often involved
- The group will have to cover any budget blow-outs or mistakes with financial planning
- More considerations for a group such as health and safety
- Attendees will bring their complaints about other members (both adults and children) to the group and will expect the group to resolve those types of issues
- Members will expect a higher degree of transparency and professionalism

The most likely scenario if the group is going to be the main organiser of activities and events is that there is an appointed Activities Coordinator. Some of the larger events may involve an organising sub-committee which reports to the main committee.

While some activities may have no charge to participants, most activities require the organiser to collect money and pay for the venue or resources. The group's committee will expect to see a detailed list of income and expenses for activities so that it is clear whether it's viable to hold that activity again in the future.

The Individual as the Organiser

Advantages:

- A simple, straight-forward and uncomplicated way of organising activities
- Very little paperwork
- The group is not liable for any shortfall in funds (but may choose to help out financially by paying for the venue or tutor)
- The group does not have to deal with issues between attendees

Disadvantages:

- Often it's the same people who do the organising and the workload isn't shared around
- The activity will be run entirely the way the organiser chooses, and this may not suit some people (though, in that case, those people are free to organise their own activity in a way that suits them)
- It can be time-consuming having to arrive early to tick off names or gather funds (though this can be mitigated by having people pay in advance by internet banking), organise any resources, set up the activity, etc
- Strong guidelines are needed in order to avoid being mucked around with non-payers, no-shows, etc

Home educators are usually very motivated to run activities, particularly because they are providing opportunities for their own children as well as others. The most common way of running a weekly activity is as follows:

1. A child expresses a desire for a specific type of activity, or the parent/caregiver has an idea for an activity they would like their child to be involved in. They look around and discover that there is nothing currently organised which would meet their needs.
2. The parent/caregiver looks into organising the activity themselves. They choose a venue, work out the costs, decide on the number of participants which can be accommodated, etc. At this point they may contact their group and see if this is something that can come under the umbrella of the group. If yes, they email members with the basic details to see if there is enough interest to move forward with the activity.
3. If there is the interest from other group members, the parent/caregiver firms up the details (dates, costs, age of children who can enrol, method for enrolling and paying, etc), notifies members of the activity, takes enrolments and does the bookings with the venue.

It's usually a pretty simple process, works well, and is how the vast majority of activities are organised.

One of the main things to consider if taking this approach is the stress on the volunteer. If volunteers are not taken care of and it is too stressful/difficult to organise events, nothing much will happen on the activities front. Things that can stress volunteers are issues with payment from attendees (it can be useful to require payment by internet banking well in

advance of the event, and to clarify that there are no refunds if the attendee can't make it at the last minute); and the conduct of children and adults at the event (which is where written behaviour expectations are useful - see below). Using the approach "individual as the organiser" is how Canterbury Home Educators organise almost all of their activities. They put out a statement each term as follows:

- *When booking an activity you need to be committed to that activity, if you're not sure then please leave that space free for other members to fill.*
- *When booking an activity you will need to pay for it even if you can't make it on the day for any reason. Most activities have the cost of a tutor/materials which still needs covering by the whole group. It simply isn't fair to ask the others of the group to cover your cost.*
- *Prompt payment by the due date is required. The organising parent is volunteering so please respect their time by not making them chase you for payment.*
- *The organiser of an activity is the sole person who defines how it is run and who can participate. Activities are run at the greatest convenience to them and they are under no obligation to run it a certain way or provide a place to everybody who applies to be involved. If you'd prefer it is run differently then please consider organising an activity yourself.*
- *The organiser of an activity can change the structure/dates/details at any time they see fit. Normally they will consult with participants where possible, but this isn't always the case.*

Behaviour Expectations

The behaviour of children (and sometimes adults!) at group-organised events, workshops or outings can be an area where there is disagreement. It is a good idea to have expectations clarified at the outset in order to avoid issues down the track.

Many established groups have a written behaviour policy. They make it clear to group members that they are responsible for their own children and that children should not be 'dropped off' to activities (unless otherwise advised). Parents/caregivers are also reminded that they are responsible for ensuring that their children are not disruptive. It can be useful to clarify what "disruptive" means and have a process in place for group members to handle these issues. Here is an example of a simple behaviour policy used by Canterbury Home Educators which has been helpful in setting expectations for adults and children alike:

- *Common courtesy is expected at all times.*
- *Arrive to activities on time.*
- *When your child is attending an activity you are expected to be there too, actively supervising them.*
- *You must deal with any disruptive behaviour from your child.*
- *Any chatting with other parents/caregivers should be done outside of the activity or far enough away so as to not disturb the activity.*

An activity planner and forms which can be adapted for your own group can be found in Appendix 3.

Troubleshooting

All groups need to consider how things will be handled when something goes wrong - such as when a member becomes dissatisfied and wants policies or processes changed, or when personalities clash and this causes conflict in the group. The most common issue in groups is discord amongst members. The first recommended step for the complainant should always be to discuss the issues with the parties involved to seek resolution. If that doesn't work and there are other options for groups to join, it might simply be a case of the aggrieved party voting with their feet and finding a new group that better meets their needs. If it's a more formalised or larger group, it is very important to have robust processes laid out in writing at the beginning of the group formation - this is far better and less stressful than quickly documenting a process while trying to handle conflict within the group.

Complaints Policy

When a member is unhappy about something that has happened within the group, the complaints process details the steps to take to make a complaint and resolve the issue. An example of a written complaints policy is shown in Appendix 4.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary process outlines the process to be followed when a member breaks the group rules. In extreme cases, the person's membership to the group may be terminated. In the interests of transparency it's important to have the whole process laid out in writing at the beginning. An example of a written disciplinary procedure is as follows:

If the conduct of any member is reported in writing to the Committee as being contrary to the objectives or interests of the Group, the matter shall be referred to the member concerned, who shall have 21 days to respond.

The Committee shall meet not later than 14 days following the end of this response period to determine the matter in a manner that is consistent with the principles of natural justice and the objectives, character, welfare and interest of the Group.

Within seven days of meeting, the Committee shall inform the member of its recommendation, which may be in the form of an exoneration, warning, suspension or expulsion, the latter two being for a stated period not exceeding three years.

The member may appeal the recommendation within 21 days of being informed, in which case the matter shall be decided finally as a resolution of the next General Meeting. If no appeal is lodged the Committee's recommendations shall take effect immediately.

Appendix 1: Example of Constitution

This is the NCHENZ Constitution. You are welcome to amend this for your own group.

National Council of Home Educators NZ Incorporated CONSTITUTION

1) TITLE

- a) The name of the Society will be 'National Council of Home Educators NZ Incorporated' hereinafter called the National Council in these rules.

2) DEFINITIONS AS USED IN THESE RULES

- a) 'Local Support Group' refers to any groups comprising five or more home educating families, whose primary purpose is to provide mutual support and social opportunities in their locality.
- b) 'Network' refers to an organisation whose primary purpose is to disseminate information to home educators, and is not to promote, sell or support specific commercial products or services.
- c) 'Home Educating' and 'Home Education' is defined as domiciliary based education of yours, your partner's or spouse's child or children over whom you have guardianship and who is/are aged 18 years or under, and undertaken with such approval as is necessary under the Education Act 1989 and its amendments, unless otherwise approved by the Committee.
- d) 'Affiliation', 'Affiliated' and 'Affiliate' refers to any group or network that is currently affiliated to the National Council subject to Clauses 5 and 6.
- e) 'Person' includes any person as defined under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.

3) OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Unity and strength

- a) To provide a nationwide forum in which individual home educators and local support groups may work together for their mutual benefit in matters of national, political or common interest.
- b) To advance home education in New Zealand, by meeting the needs of home educating families and local support groups.

Information and support

- c) To provide or facilitate access to information, resources, counselling and support services for the benefit of home educators, local support groups and the interested public.
- d) To assist home educators and their children to access educational, sporting, employment and other opportunities within the community.
- e) To conduct or support research/study about home education in New Zealand.

Voice for home educators

- f) To educate and increase the public's awareness of home education, and to promote home education as a responsible, desirable and credible educational choice.
- g) To make representation relevant to home education on matters determined by the membership to maintain and improve the present conditions for home educating.

4) MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Membership admission

- a) Membership of the National Council is:
 - i) Open to any person 18 years and over who supports the objectives and agrees to be bound by the Constitution of the National Council; and
 - ii) Open to any group constituted under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908, which supports the objectives and agrees to be bound by the Constitution of the National Council; and
 - iii) By application to the Secretary on the approved membership form completed in full and accompanied by the membership fee, if any.
- b) The Committee shall determine by majority vote whether an applicant is eligible for admission under Clause 4(a) of these rules.
- c) No member may represent the National Council without the authority to do so under these rules or by resolution of the National Council.

Membership Form - Individual Membership

- d) The first or only member listed on any one membership form shall pay the full membership fee, if applicable, and be known as a 'standard member'.
- e) Every additional member listed thereafter on the same membership form shall be known as an 'additional member', always providing that:
 - i) The additional member is a spouse/partner or child of the standard member and resides at the same address.
 - ii) Only one copy of all National Council correspondence shall be delivered per membership form to the email address stated, and shall be regarded as being received by all members residing at that address.

- f) 'Grouplink' status may be attached to a membership form, entitling those members to a membership fee discount, if applicable, always providing that:
 - i) At least one member listed on that form is a current member of a group or network which is a member of or affiliated to the National Council under these rules.
 - ii) The name of the member or affiliate group as specified under Clause f(i) to which the member belongs is recorded on the membership form or renewal form, and in so doing the members is deemed to permit the National Council to verify such membership.
 - iii) 'Grouplink' status is applied for, each year thereafter on renewal of the membership fee, if any.
- g) A register of members shall be maintained by the Secretary in accordance with the Incorporated Societies Act 1908, the Privacy Act 1993, and any amendments, and shall include each member's name, email address, contact numbers, joining date, and membership status.
- h) It is the responsibility of members to inform the Secretary of changes to their membership, address or contact details.

Disciplinary procedure

- i) If the conduct of any member is reported in writing to the Committee as being contrary to the objectives or interests of the National Council, the matter shall be referred to the member concerned, who shall have 21 days to respond.
- j) The Committee shall meet not later than 14 days following the end of this response period to determine the matter in a manner that is consistent with the principles of natural justice and the objectives, character, welfare and interest of the National Council.
- k) Within seven days of meeting, the Committee shall inform the member of its recommendation, which may be in the form of an exoneration, warning, suspension or expulsion, the latter two being for a stated period not exceeding three years.
- l) The member may appeal the recommendation within 21 days of being informed, in which case the matter shall be decided finally as a resolution of the next General Meeting. If no appeal is lodged the Committee's recommendations shall take effect immediately.

Termination of membership

- m) Membership is terminated whenever:
 - i) A member gives written notice of his or her resignation to the Secretary.
 - ii) A member fails to pay any outstanding membership renewal fee pursuant to Clause 7(b).
 - iii) A member is expelled for conduct that is contrary to the objects or interests of the National Council pursuant to Clauses 4(i) to 4(l).

5) AFFILIATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS AND NETWORKS TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

- a) Affiliation to the National Council is by application to the Secretary on the approved form and is open to any local support group or network which meets the conditions of affiliation under these rules.
- b) The Committee shall determine whether or not the applicant meets the conditions of affiliation under these rules by a simple majority.
- c) Affiliation shall be terminated whenever:
 - i) The affiliate gives notice of its resignation in writing to the Secretary.
 - ii) The affiliate fails to pay any outstanding affiliation renewal fee pursuant to Clause 7(b).
 - iii) The affiliate is deemed by the Committee to no longer meet the conditions of affiliation.
- d) An applicant whose affiliation to the National Council has been previously rejected or terminated may reapply under these rules not more than once in any financial year.
- e) The Secretary shall keep a record of all applications, renewals and terminations of affiliation.

6) CONDITIONS OF AFFILIATION

- a) An applicant shall be deemed eligible for affiliation to the National Council providing that it:
 - i) Meets the definition of a local support group or network as determined by the Committee.
 - ii) Undertakes to support the aims and objectives of the National Council.
 - iii) Agrees to be bound by the conditions of affiliation under these rules.
 - iv) Pays the appropriate fee on application, if any, and each financial year thereafter as required.
 - v) Agrees to verify on request the membership status of any person who applies to the National Council for 'group link' status pursuant to Clause 4(f).
 - vi) Is considered by the National Council to be in the best interests of the National Council.
- b) Every affiliated group or network shall appoint a liaison officer who shall liaise with the National Council on the affiliate's behalf.
- c) Every affiliated group or network is autonomous and operates independently of the National Council except where their affiliation makes them subject to the terms of this Constitution.
- d) Every affiliated group or network may represent itself on any matter independently of the National Council, but in a manner that acknowledges and respects the National Council's responsibility to represent all its members.
- e) No affiliated group or network may represent the National Council in any matter.

- f) An affiliate may appoint a delegate to attend any General Meeting. The delegate shall not vote, but may speak with the leave of the Meeting.
- g) The Committee may from time to time negotiate with an affiliated group or network the provision of any service or information that is mutually agreed upon, provided that in doing so the objectives and rules of the National Council are upheld.

7) FINANCIAL YEAR

- a) The financial year of the National Council shall commence on 1 April each year, or such other yearly period as may be determined by any Annual General Meeting.
- b) Each member and affiliate shall pay to the National Council an annual fee if set by the Committee as per Clause 7(d), which shall be due on or before the first day of each financial period. A member or affiliate who fails to pay outstanding fees by the end of the third month of the financial year shall be deemed to have resigned.
- c) A member who has outstanding fees pursuant to Clause 7(b) may attend any General Meeting but shall not otherwise participate in the activities, voting procedures, or receive the benefits of membership of the National Council until such time that the fee is paid.
- d) The annual fees, if any, shall be set by the Committee subject to any remit passed at the preceding General Meeting.
 - i) A fee for standard members pursuant to Clause 4(d).
 - ii) A fee for additional members pursuant to Clause 4(e).
 - iii) A grouplink discount pursuant to Clause 4(f).
 - iv) A group affiliation fee to be paid by affiliates pursuant to Clause 6(a)(iv).

8) GENERAL MEETINGS AND VOTING

Procedure at all General Meetings

- a) Under these rules a General Meeting is an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting.
- b) A General Meeting shall comprise officers of the Committee, those members who wish to attend, and any delegates appointed by affiliates. Persons who are not members of the National Council may attend only with the leave of the Meeting.
- c) Notice of all General Meetings shall include the date, time, venue, business to be conducted, and methods of voting. Notice shall be regarded as being sufficiently given when sent to a members' or affiliates' last known postal or electronic address.
- d) All remits for consideration by a General Meeting shall be in the form of a motion that shall be accompanied by a brief summary of arguments in support thereof.
- e) At any General Meeting the Chair shall be taken by the Coordinator, or in his or her absence, by any officer who has been elected to do so by the Committee. The Coordinator or any other person presiding over a meeting may exercise a members vote but shall have no casting vote, in accordance with Clause 8(k).

- f) To transact the business of the General Meeting, a quorum of at least ten members shall be present. If a quorum cannot be reached, the General Meeting shall be postponed to any time not exceeding 28 days thereafter and members shall receive not less than 14 days of the new date.
- g) A summary of the events and decisions of a General Meeting shall be recorded in the next report distributed to members pursuant to Clause 13(h)(i).
- h) Voting conducted at Meetings shall be by a show of hands, or by secret poll if demanded by any two members, providing always for the counting of any postal or electronic votes.
- i) Notwithstanding Clause 8(h), wherever possible the General Meeting shall make its decisions by consensus, but where consensus cannot be reached a decision shall be made by simply majority.
- j) In the event of equality of votes the motion shall be lost.
- k) A member who is unable to attend a General Meeting may vote by way of:
 - i) Postal or electronic ballot, which shall be provided for all motions concerning changes to the Constitution, dissolution of the National Council, election of officers, final approval of affiliation, and any other matter for which the notice required under these rules has been given.
 - ii) Proxy vote, provided that a member of the National Council is the proxy bearer, and no member attending a meeting may hold more than five proxy votes.
- l) Members who vote by proxy shall do so only by correctly completing the approved forms provided for this purpose and registering them with the Secretary on or before 5.00pm of the third day before the General Meeting at which the voting shall be concluded.
- m) The attendance of a member at a General Meeting automatically invalidates any postal or electronic ballot or proxy that he or she may have previously registered for that meeting.

9) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Before the Annual General Meeting

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held once in every calendar year at such time and place as was determined at the preceding Annual General Meeting, providing that the meeting is held earlier than 15 months since the last preceding Annual General Meeting and not later than three months since the commencement of a new financial year.
- b) The Annual General Meeting shall be held by way of electronic means or conference telephone.
- c) Pursuant to Clause 8(c) the Secretary shall send a preliminary notice of the Meeting to members not less than 70 days before the Annual General Meeting. The notice shall include a call for resolutions to be voted on, nominations for office, and other items of business to be raised.

- d) Those members who wish to respond shall do so in writing and shall deliver the same to the Secretary not less than 56 days before the Annual General Meeting.
- e) The Secretary shall send to members a postal or electronic ballot notice not less than 42 days before the Annual General Meeting, which shall include any resolutions to be voted on by postal or electronic ballot.
- f) Those members who wish to provide concise arguments in support or rebuttal of the resolutions may do so and shall deliver the same to the Secretary not less than 28 days before the Annual General Meeting.
- g) The Secretary shall send to members a final notice not less than 14 days before the Annual General Meeting which shall include an agenda stating the nature of any known business intended to be transacted at the meeting, candidates for officer election, a summary of members' arguments pursuant to Clause 9(f), audited or reviewed accounts if available, postal or electronic ballot voting forms and proxy forms.

At the Annual General Meeting

- h) The business of every Annual General Meeting of the National Council shall be:
 - i) To approve nominations and elect the officers of the Executive Committee.
 - ii) To consider final approval for the affiliation of any group or network pursuant to Clause 5(c).
 - iii) To vote on resolutions, rule changes, and transact other businesses of which notice has been given.
 - iv) To propose direction for the activities of the National Council of Home Educators NZ for the following year.
 - v) To receive the annual report from the Coordinator.
 - vi) To receive the financial report from the Treasurer and the duly audited or reviewed annual statements of income, expenditure, and assets and liabilities of the National Council.
 - vii) To appoint an auditor or reviewer for the ensuing year providing he or she is not a member of the National Council.
 - viii) To approve the fees of the National Council pursuant to Clause 7(d).
 - ix) To determine the date and venue of the next Annual General Meeting.
 - x) To consider any matters under appeal.
 - xi) To consider any other general business.

Election of officers

- i) The Coordinator shall determine the eligibility of any candidate standing for election. In the event eligibility is in dispute then the Annual General Meeting shall determine the matter by majority vote.
- j) In the event that there are not enough officers elected to support a quorum of the Executive Committee, the Annual General Meeting shall accept further nominations for the remaining vacant positions and these shall be voted on pursuant to Clause 9(i)

by the members present at the Meeting. In the event that this is unsuccessful, the incumbent Committee shall call for further nominations and conduct officer elections for those vacant positions by way of a special postal or electronic ballot.

- k) The new Committee shall be deemed to commence office the day after a minimum quorum of officers is elected.
- l) A person shall not be elected to the position of Coordinator for more than three consecutive terms, but may be elected to any other position on the Committee.

10) SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL BALLOT DATES

- a) A Special General Meeting may be convened by a majority vote of the Committee, or by written requisition to the Committee of not less than one third of the members.
- b) Pursuant to Clause 8(c) the Secretary shall send a notice of the meeting to members not less than 21 days before a Special General Meeting. The notice shall include the purpose of the meeting and the resolutions to be voted on. A Special General Meeting shall consider only that business for which it has been called.
- c) A Special General Meeting may include voting via a postal or electronic ballot in which case:
 - i) Those members who wish to provide concise arguments in support or rebuttal of the resolutions may do so and shall deliver the same to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the Special General Meeting.
 - ii) The Secretary shall send to members a final notice not less than 10 days before the Special General Meeting which shall include special postal or electronic ballot voting forms and a summary of members' arguments.
- d) A postal or electronic ballot may be conducted without convening a Special General Meeting, and this shall be called a Special Postal or Electronic Ballot, providing that:
 - i) The Special Postal or Electronic Ballot is convened in the manner of a Special General Meeting pursuant to Clause 10(a).
 - ii) The Special Postal or Electronic Ballot adheres to all the same notice requirements of a Special General Meeting pursuant to Clauses 10(b) and 10(c), except that in each case the number of days notice shall be before a ballot closing date specified by the Committee.
 - iii) A quorum for a Special Postal or Electronic Ballot shall be the casting of votes by at least fifteen members.

11) STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

Officers' functions on the Committee

- a) The Committee shall comprise a Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer and up to eight other officers who shall each have a vote at a meeting of the Committee. At least two officers of the Committee shall be resident in the South Island at the time of their election to office and at least two officers shall be resident in the North Island at the time of their election to office.

- b) The Committee may distribute among the officers the following portfolios - newsletter, publicity and promotion, fundraising, spokesperson, lobbyist, group liaison and any other portfolio that is considered necessary to further the objectives.
- c) The Coordinator shall coordinate the activities, functions and responsibilities of the Committee, present a report to the National Council membership at the Annual General Meeting, and preside over all meetings of the National Council.
- d) The Secretary shall summon and attend all meetings, record attendance and minutes at meetings, record correspondence, keep a register of members, hold the Common Seal, and perform such duties and functions as shall from time to time devolve upon him or her.
- e) The Treasurer shall administer and report on the National Council's accounts subject to these rules.

Committee meetings

- f) The Coordinator shall chair the Committee meetings. The Coordinator may cast a deliberative vote, but may have no casting vote.
- g) Meetings of the Committee shall be held not less than once each quarter. The Committee may hold other meetings or otherwise make its decisions by way of electronic means, conference telephone, or by resolutions in writing, provided that all officers receive reasonable notice of the business to be conducted.
- h) The quorum required to transact the business of the Committee shall be at least 60% of the Committee, with a minimum quorum of four officers.
- i) Members of the National Council may be present at the discretion of the Committee, but shall have no voting rights.
- j) The Committee shall strive to seek consensus, or failing that shall make its decisions by majority vote. In the event of equality of voting the motion shall be lost.
- k) All meetings and decisions shall be recorded by way of minutes and shall be distributed to all officers within 21 days.
- l) Any person presiding over a meeting of the National Council or Committee shall relinquish the chair to an independent officer in order to enter into discussion or advocate a viewpoint on matters of substance. This shall be recorded in the minutes.
- m) An officer shall not be present during a discussion or vote on any matter in which he or she has a pecuniary interest or other conflict of interest, and this shall be recorded in the minutes.

12) TO QUALIFY FOR ELECTION AS A COMMITTEE MEMBER

- a) To qualify for election a candidate shall be, on the day of election:
 - i) A member of the National Council; and
 - ii) A member of the National Council for the preceding 12 months; and
 - iii) Able to access a reasonable and confidential internet connection; and
 - iv) The parent or guardian of a child aged six to eighteen years for whom he or she is currently home educating, pursuant to Clause 2(c); or

- v) The parent or guardian of a child aged under six years if he or she is intending to home educate the child once the child reaches six years of age, pursuant to Clause 2(c); or
- vi) At the discretion of the Committee as long as candidates who do not meet qualifiers 12(a)(ii) and 12(a)(iv) do not hold the position of Coordinator, and as long as more than half of the officers on the Committee meet qualifier 12(a)(iv).
- b) The candidate shall complete the nomination form provided by the Committee which shall include the desired officer position or positions and a seconder to the nominations and shall be encouraged to supply relevant skills and experiences and a personal profile.
- c) The candidate shall be deemed to be serving the National Council, and shall not hold the position of affiliate delegate or liaison officer to the National Council during the term of office.

13) **THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

Responsibilities of the Committee

- a) The Committee shall uphold the objectives and rules of the National Council and ensure that the National Council operates ethically, honourably and lawfully.
- b) The Committee shall administer the day to day business of the National Council, fulfilling the Committee's various obligations under these rules, implementing the policy and decisions of the National Council's membership and otherwise serving the membership pursuant to these rules.

Duties of the Committee

- c) To call all meetings of the National Council and facilitate the process by which the National Council makes its decisions.
- d) To authorise all payments and investments and enter into such agreements and contracts as are required from time to time.
- e) To fill any officer vacancy that arises on the Committee during the year with the next highest polling nominee, or failing that, by calling for nominations and conducting elections by way of a Special Ballot.
- f) To co-opt members to perform delegated tasks and appoint subcommittees with such powers and authority as specified. All such co-options and appointments shall cease on the Committee's last day of office, but may be reconvened by the incoming Committee.
- g) To employ and engage such servants or agents as it thinks fit and shall determine their remuneration.
- h) To distribute a quarterly report of the Committee to members no less than four times each year, which shall include:
 - i) A summary of the Committee and National Council activities and decisions for the preceding period.
 - ii) The names of elected officers or other appointments.

- iii) Any questionnaires that may from time to time be used to solicit members' views.
- iv) Notices concerning all applications for affiliation, forthcoming meetings, matters subject to appeal etc.
- v) Any other business or information that the Committee thinks fit.

14) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Duties of the Treasurer

- a) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the National Council's financial affairs, including its income, payments and authorisation.
- b) The Treasurer shall report to the Committee on the state of the National Council's finances at each quarterly meeting, and shall prepare a report for the Annual General Meeting.
- c) The Secretary shall deliver an annual statement required by the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 signed to the effect that the statement has been submitted to and approved by a General Meeting of the National Council.
- d) All monies received on behalf of the National Council shall be paid forthwith to the credit of the National Council at its accredited bank.
- e) All receipts for money paid or for property transferred or conveyed to the National Council shall be signed by the Treasurer.
- f) Cheques drawn or internet banking payments made by the National Council shall be on the presentation of an invoice and shall be authorised by the: Coordinator or Treasurer, and one other officer. The Treasurer shall keep record of all payments and their authorisations.
- g) The accounts shall be audited or reviewed after each financial year, on the resignation of the Treasurer if that occurs mid-year, and at the direction of the Committee.

Investment and control

- h) The National Council has all the powers of a natural person so long as it exercises those powers in good faith and to further the objectives of the National Council.
- i) Any surplus funds not required for the immediate use of the National Council shall be invested in an institution approved by the National Council.
- j) The power of borrowing money may only be exercised by the National Council at a General Meeting.
- k) Legacies, endowments, contributions or other gifts of money or other real or personal property may be made to the National Council generally, or for the purpose of any specific objective of the National Council.
- l) No member shall derive pecuniary profit from any activity of the National Council pursuant to the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. However, nothing shall prevent the National Council from making fair and reasonable reimbursements or remuneration, provided that the member is not able by virtue of their capacity as a member, to materially influence the amount or nature of such payment.

15) THE COMMON SEAL

- a) The Common Seal of the National Council shall be kept in the custody of the Secretary.
- b) When required the Common Seal shall be affixed to any document following a resolution of the National Council or the Committee. The Secretary and one other executive officer shall sign their names alongside the Common Seal whenever it is used.

16) ALTERATIONS OF RULES

- a) Subject to Clause 16(c) these rules or any part of them may be altered, added to, or rescinded by a resolution passed by a majority vote of not less than 75% of eligible members who vote.
- b) Voting on the resolutions may be conducted at a General Meeting, or by special postal or electronic ballot, provided notice of not less than 42 days has been sent to members.
- c) No change shall be made to these rules if it affects Clause 14(i) or Clause 17(d).
- d) No change to the constitution shall take effect before it has been duly registered under the provisions of the Incorporated Societies Act 1908 or subsequent amendments.

17) LIQUIDATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

- a) The National Council may be put into liquidation if a General Meeting passes a resolution to that effect and appoints a liquidator, providing that the resolution is confirmed at a Special General Meeting convened for that purpose not less than 30 days later.
- b) The resolution shall be carried by a 75% majority of eligible votes cast.
- c) Upon dissolution any surplus assets belonging to the National Council shall be distributed equitably amongst the groups and networks affiliated to the National Council at the time of dissolution as decided by the final meeting.
- d) In no circumstances will the surplus assets be distributed either directly or indirectly to individual members.

18) REGISTERED OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

- a) The Registered Office of the National Council shall be in such place as the National Council may from time to time determine, and the Registrar of Incorporated Societies shall be informed in writing of any such change.

Appendix 2:

Example of Social Media Policy

This is the NCHENZ Social Media Policy for operation of our Yahoo and Facebook groups. You are welcome to amend this for your own group.

Policy for Operation of NCHENZ Facebook/Yahoo Groups

The aim of this policy is to outline the measures the NCHENZ Executive Committee uses to operate its Facebook and Yahoo groups. The Executive Committee recognises the value of online social networking to connect, inform, learn, and create - but also recognises that it is impossible to control all aspects of social networking and that issues can quite easily arise. This document has been designed to guide members in their conduct on the groups as well as provide a process for Admin in the event of any problems.

Management

- At least one member of the Executive Committee is to be appointed Admin.
- Membership requests will be approved by Admin in a timely manner.
- If posts are moderated, this will happen in a timely manner.

General Conduct & Use

- Posts must be respectful in tone and content.
- Posts must be broadly relevant to home educating.
- The group is for the use of adults only.
- The group is not for venting frustrations regarding NCHENZ, any member of the Executive Committee, any member of NCHENZ, or for lodging complaints about NCHENZ.
- Files can be uploaded by any member of the group and must be relevant to NCHENZ aims and activities.
- Photos can be uploaded by any member of the group. The intention of any photo should be to contribute to the sharing of information within the group. Photos must not show any person in any state of undress, or in any kind of pose which could be considered provocative. If unsure, consult Admin and err on the side of caution.
- Any posts, comments or photographs that are deemed inappropriate will be removed by Admin. Repeated misuse of the group will result in a loss of access - Admin is to follow the Termination Process (outlined below).

Sharing of Posts or Comments

- What is expressed in the group must stay in the NCHENZ group. In particular, permission must be sought before any post of a personal nature (ie. includes personal information or contact details) is shared outside of the group.

- Any links to the NCHENZ website or written NCHENZ documentation (such as the quarterly newsletter) is under copyright. This means the information can be shared if basic netiquette is followed, including accurate source attribution (ie. the source of the information must be fully noted when sharing). Not attributing source accurately is considered content theft and repeated breaches will see the removal of the member from the group.
- Posts meant specifically for NCHENZ members (such as member offers or emails to the group) may not be shared without permission and may result in the poster's removal from the group.

Termination Process

1. Admin will immediately action the breach (ie. delete the comment, take down the photo, remove the file, privately inform the member of a lack of netiquette - whichever is appropriate) and notify the member that they breached the terms of the NCHENZ Facebook/Yahoo Groups Policy. Admin will provide the member with a link to the policy. Admin will also report the breach to the NCHENZ Coordinator and raise it at the next NCHENZ Executive Committee meeting.
2. In the case of a second breach by the same member, Admin will repeat Step 1 above while also warning the member that one further breach will result in their membership to the group being terminated. Admin will take care to report the second breach to the NCHENZ Coordinator and raise it at the next NCHENZ Executive Committee meeting as well.
3. In the case of a third breach by the same member, Admin will immediately terminate the membership of that individual. Admin will report this to the NCHENZ Coordinator and raise it at the next NCHENZ Executive Committee meeting.

Appendix 3: Activity Planning Forms

Thanks to Manawatu Home Educators for sharing their well documented activity planning guidelines, forms and processes. You are welcome to amend these forms for your own group.

Activity Planner

Event Name:

Event Organiser:

Phone: Email:

Date of Event:

Start Time: Finish Time:

Weather Requirements:

Event Brief:

.....

Venue(s):

Venue Contact Name:

Phone: Email:

Age(s):

Age Limitations:

Number Limits:

Adult Helpers:

Name: Phone: Email:

Name: Phone: Email:

Name: Phone: Email:

Cost per Child Member: Non-Member:

Children Need to Bring:

.....

.....

Learning Goals:

.....

.....

.....

Resources Needed:

.....

.....

.....

Health & Safety:

.....

.....

Notification: Group Website Email Members Facebook Group Yahoo Group

Other Info:

Emergency Contact Details

	Child's Name	Parent Contact	Phone Number
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

Activity Evaluation

What went well?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What could improve for next time?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Numbers Attended:

Children

Adult helpers

Appendix 4:

Example of Complaints Policy

You are welcome to amend this for your own group.

Complaints Policy for “Group”

“Group” views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the member that has made the complaint.

The policy of “Group” is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for members wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of the complaints procedure so that members know how to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone in “Group” knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of “Group”. Complaints may only be made by individuals who are members of “Group”. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. All complaint information will be handled sensitively and confidentially as far as possible while endeavouring to resolve the complaint.

Step 1

In the first instance the complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Step 2

If there is no resolution in attempting to resolve the complaint with the person directly concerned, complaints must be made in writing to [address] or by email to [email address]. Your written complaint should detail the following points:

- Your name, address, email address and telephone number

- Your relationship to "Group"
- The facts of the complaint

An acknowledgement of the receipt of your complaint will be sent within one week. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

You will be kept informed of the investigation into the complaint at least every two weeks.

Once the complaint has been fully investigated, you will be informed of the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Step 3

If you feel that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved after Step 2, you can request that the complaint be reviewed again at committee level. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint, as well as yourself and other people involved.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

The decision taken at this stage is final unless the committee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

The committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest - for example, a complaint about the Coordinator should not also have the Coordinator as the person leading the investigation into the complaint.