

STAFF POLICY

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre QMS Component

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1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the manner in which staff selection, appraisal, development conduct and discipline occurs. Operating within the policy will ensure that staff have the qualifications, experience and opportunities available to meet programme, stakeholder and industry requirements.

Taratahi values its staff. As a good employer (as defined by the State Sector Act 1988 and Amendments), Taratahi will follow a transparent and fair procedure for the recruitment of staff. Taratahi will seek to provide a worthwhile and satisfying work experience for staff and to ensure their health and wellbeing.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This is an organisational wide policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. For the purposes of this section, a good employer is an employer who operates a personnel policy containing provisions generally accepted as necessary for the fair and proper treatment of employees in all aspects of their employment, including provisions requiring—

- (a) good and safe working conditions; and
- (b) an equal employment opportunities programme; and
- (c) the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment; and
- (d) recognition of—
 - (i) the aims and aspirations of the Maori people; and
 - (ii) the employment requirements of the Maori people; and
 - (iii) the need for greater involvement of the Maori people in the Public Service; and
- (e) opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees; and
- (f) recognition of the aims and aspirations and employment requirements, and the cultural differences, of ethnic or minority groups; and
- (g) recognition of the employment requirements of women; and
- (h) recognition of the employment requirements of persons with disabilities.

A good employer also includes an employer who ensures that all staff uphold proper standards of conduct, integrity and behaviour.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO or their designated representative is responsible for this policy.

5. THE PROCEDURE

5.1. Staff Selection, Recruitment, Appointment and Induction

- 5.1.1. The CEO is responsible for the employment of individuals. This authority is contained in the Education Act 1989 (and Amendments) (Section 196) and the State Sector Act 1988 (and Amendments) (Part VIIa)
- 5.1.2. The CEO may from time to time delegate the responsibility for employment matters to other senior members of the organisation.
- 5.1.3. All permanent full time vacancies will ordinarily be externally advertised. Other significant vacancies will also be advertised as appropriate. Before being advertised, the position will have an updated and complete position description developed.
- 5.1.4. Applications must be received by delegated staff, on or before the closing date as stated in the position advertisement. Applications will be acknowledged in writing (by email if this is how the application was sent) as soon as they are received.
- 5.1.5. All applications will be collated after the closing date for the purpose of shortlisting and selecting suitable applicants for interviewing.
- 5.1.6. The shortlisting and interview process should be carried out by the CEO or delegate and a mix of other Taratahi staff whose combined experience, life skills and degree of objectivity are seen as most likely to identify and promote the applicant(s) with the most merit.
- 5.1.7. Applicants who are not shortlisted and selected to be interviewed will be notified in writing, or by email, if this is how the application was received, as soon as practicable after the shortlisting process has been completed.
- 5.1.8. Applicant/s selected for an interview will be advised by telephone.
- 5.1.9. Where appropriate, and at its discretion, Taratahi will assist with travel expenses incurred by applicants attending an interview.
- 5.1.10. Interview results will be recorded, and the applicants ranked according to the general consensus of the interview panel.
- 5.1.11. Reference checking of the preferred applicant(s) will be conducted at Taratahi's discretion during the interview process.
- 5.1.12. It is the responsibility of the CEO to make the final decision as to which applicant will be offered the position.
- 5.1.13. The successful applicant will be offered the position initially by telephone and then by letter confirming the offer.
- 5.1.14. Unsuccessful applicants who attended interviews will be notified as soon as practicable.

- 5.1.15. The successful applicant will receive a written offer of appointment together with a proposed Employment agreement. The offer of appointment will include key points of the employment agreement including remuneration of the position and expenses which can be reclaimed including relocation expenses if and where appropriate.
- 5.1.16. Employees are encouraged to take independent legal advice before signing their employment agreement.
- 5.1.17. In the event that a trial period applies under the Employment Relations Act 2000 and its amendments, the employee is not permitted to start work until the relevant employment agreement containing the trial period is signed by both parties.
- 5.1.18. New staff will meet with the CEO and/or their immediate manager to discuss a staff development programme. This agreement will be for the interim, period between the commencement of employment and the next round of staff appraisal meetings
- 5.1.19. The new Taratahi staff member's Manager is required to provide the initial training in the job and to ensure that the new staff member is familiar with their job requirements. A staff induction folder and checklist is presented to each new staff member and it is their immediate manager's responsibility to ensure the entire checklist is completed.

5.2. Staff Appraisal

- 5.2.1. The Performance Appraisal process aims to provide regular feedback on performance and to encourage staff to grow professionally. Implementation of this policy allows management to assess staff performance on an annual basis.
- 5.2.2. The Appraisal process recognises that all staff members play a key role in the success of Taratahi. How well the development and performance of staff members is managed will not only affect them as individuals, but also collectively, as part of the overall Taratahi organisation.
- 5.2.3. Staff appraisal involves individual staff meeting their manager who provides feedback on performance and negotiates performance goals for the following year. The achievements of performance goals are evaluated. Any strengths and weaknesses are identified and training needs are addressed.
- 5.2.4. Staff appraisal will occur at least once per year. Details of an employee's appraisal process will be clarified in their individual employment agreement.
- 5.2.5. Salary reviews take into account the results of performance appraisal; however a positive or satisfactory performance appraisal does not automatically entail a salary increase.

5.3. Staff Development

- 5.3.1. Taratahi is committed to staff development and recognises that well trained staff are essential for the delivery of quality education. Staff development also aims to develop individual staff so that they can make an effective contribution to meeting Taratahi's and students' needs.
- 5.3.2. Professional development may include in-house training; on-job-training, attendance at industry seminars or conferences, study programmes, extramural studies an induction and orientation programme and others. Staff may, as a result of their performance appraisal, be directed to attend specific training
- 5.3.3. If a trial or probationary period is applicable to an employee, if any areas are identified that require improvement the new staff member will be given the opportunity, within reason, to receive professional development in those areas.
- 5.3.4. Individual advice and support for staff in matters relating to their professional development is available from immediate managers.
- 5.3.5. The basic skills training needs of new staff will be identified and staff given the opportunity, where time and resources allow, to attend courses based on their needs. Training needs are evaluated at regular intervals and appropriate courses are developed and delivered to meet these needs.
- 5.3.6. Staff are supported and encouraged, where time and resources allow, to extend their range of work skills and knowledge, not only within their current job description scope but also in areas where they have personal interests. In this way staff are prepared for new and changing roles within Taratahi and also after Taratahi.
- 5.3.7. It is the staff members responsibility to prepare requests for financial assistance towards professional development and to provide these to their manager
- 5.3.8. Managers are required to maintain details of staff development and provide these to the Heads of Programmes when requested.

5.4. Staff Discipline

- 5.4.1. As a good employer, Taratahi recognises that transparent and fair procedures relating to staff discipline will assist in developing and maintaining excellent staff.
- 5.4.2. The CEO has responsibility for all aspects relating to staff discipline. The CEO may, where appropriate, delegate these responsibilities to other members of management.
- 5.4.3. Before considering any form of disciplinary action an investigation into the alleged misconduct or other action must be carried out as soon as is practicable.
- 5.4.4. Before entering into a formal disciplinary process where the issue involves performance, the CEO or delegate shall take such reasonable and practicable steps to give staff opportunity to improve as is appropriate in the circumstances,.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to move directly to formal disciplinary procedures.

- 5.4.5. Prior to any formal disciplinary procedures, the staff member concerned will be advised of the specific allegation and of the likely consequences should the allegation be found to be true. The staff member will also be advised that they are entitled to have a support person at the formal disciplinary meeting. During the meeting the staff member will be given an opportunity to discuss the allegation. The staff member's explanation will be considered before a decision is made on the appropriate course of action.
- 5.4.6. If the CEO or their delegate decides to issue a warning, this will be formally and clearly issued and confirmed in writing. The staff member will be advised of any corrective action that is required and the consequence of continued or further instances of misconduct or substandard job performance.
- 5.4.7. These are the steps in the formal disciplinary procedure:
- verbal warning (recorded in writing)
 - written warning;
 - final written warning;
 - dismissal.

Note: Where circumstances arise where it would not be appropriate to follow all of the above steps, one or more steps may be omitted. For example, this could apply in cases of serious misconduct, where dismissal without notice may occur.

- 5.4.8. Progressive warnings are not limited to repetitions of the same conduct, but may be applied where the conduct is dissimilar.
- 5.4.9. Warnings will generally be placed on personnel files.
- 5.4.10. Where circumstances warrant it, the CEO must approve any decision to temporarily suspend the staff member from their duties prior to a full investigation of the allegations. The employee must first be given the opportunity to discuss the proposal of suspension, and consideration of the employee's views will be taken into account. The employee will normally be paid their normal wages while they are suspended, unless, for example, the period becomes prolonged as a result of undue delay caused by the staff member.

5.4.11. Misconduct by a staff member may give rise to dismissal; and in some instances, misconduct as defined below, could constitute serious misconduct. Conduct that may give rise to dismissal includes (but is not limited to) the following workplace issues:

- Unauthorized possession of property/equipment;
- Non Adherence to safety regulations and use of safety equipment;
- Unauthorized use of the property/equipment;
- Failure to account for the property/equipment;
- Failure to follow cash handling procedures;
- Falsification or being party to falsification of any work document or record;
- Disclosure of confidential information;
- Deliberate misconduct likely to result in harm to fellow staff, students, clients or members of the public;
- Failure to attend the registered medical practitioner for testing for non-prescribed drugs, stimulants or alcohol;
- Failure to allow an authorised search of the staff members personal effects, which are at Taratahi premises for non-prescribed drugs, stimulants or alcohol;
- Providing false or misleading information or suppressing material facts in the Employment application, resume, pre employment questionnaire or at the formal interview(s);
- harassment or discriminatory behavior;
- association with students where they are involved in illegal activities or breaching of Taratahi rules;
- Deliberate and/or continual breach of Taratahi policies

5.5. Termination for Serious Misconduct

The Employer may terminate employment immediately and without notice for serious misconduct on the part of the Employee. Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- theft;
- dishonesty;
- harassment of a work colleague or customer;
- serious or repeated failure to follow a reasonable instruction;
- deliberate destruction of any property belonging to the Employer;
- actions which have or may have the effect of seriously damaging the Employer's reputation;

- Possession and/or use of non-prescribed drugs or stimulants.
- Inappropriate relationships with students.

5.6. Conflict of Interest

Staff must not engage in any paid or unpaid employment, which might adversely affect the performance of the duties of their position while employed at Taratahi, without the written permission of the CEO.

- 5.6.1. Staff must declare any interest in any business of any kind in which there may be a potential conflict or competition with the business of Taratahi. Further, staff may not, invest personal monies, obtain an interest in or establish any other business that may be deemed to be in competition with Taratahi or its principals, without the written permission of the CEO.

5.7. Values and Behaviour

- 5.7.1. As an educational institution, Taratahi has certain obligations towards the wider community. While Taratahi respects that all staff have a right to their own personal life outside of work, it is important that staff are aware that an educational organisation is affected by public perception of individual staff's action both inside and outside work hours.
- 5.7.2. Staff must also take all necessary steps as detailed below, so as to keep professional boundaries between staff and students in place. These steps are also designed to protect staff from any instance of allegations of inappropriate behavior, which could bring disrepute to Taratahi and to the staff member, and which could be highly stressful for all parties.
- 5.7.3. Staff shall
- Exercise caution when travelling or spending time alone with a student.
 - Seek approval from a member of the Senior Management Team before employing or allowing students to their homes or property.
 - Seek approval from a Senior Manager in all matters involving the supply of alcohol to students. This includes visiting licensed venues whether the student is drinking or not.
 - Not use discriminatory or inappropriate language towards students, staff or the organisation.
- 5.7.4. Staff are advised of the importance of maintaining the integrity of professional relationships between staff and students, and must take all care to uphold those boundaries at all times
- 5.7.5. Relationships between staff and students other than in the course of the normal professional teacher/tutor student relationship are discouraged, where such a relationship is found to exist, Taratahi, at its discretion may remove that staff member from duties which involve their interaction with that student;
- 5.7.6. Staff should not, after hours, socialise with students unless approval has been granted from a member of the Senior Management Team

- 5.7.7. Where Taratahi has reason to believe that a staff member has acted in a manner which does not maintain the integrity of staff/student professional relationships and boundaries, the matter will be fully investigated, and disciplinary action may result;
- 5.7.8. If a staff member is concerned about any issue relating to student/staff boundaries, they must immediately take steps to seek advice from management, so that appropriate steps can be taken uphold these boundaries; including where a staff member may feel uncomfortable in the presence of one or more students.

5.8. Interactions with other staff

- 5.8.1. As well as the importance of maintaining proper boundaries and professional relationships between students and staff, staff are also reminded of the importance of maintaining and promoting professional relationships within staff. Where a relationship affects workplace performance/work outcomes this shall be dealt with through normal performance procedures
- 5.8.2. Staff should not make offensive, derogatory or discriminatory comments about other members of staff, whether in the presence of students, other members of staff, or the general public , and where such comments are alleged to have occurred, an investigation will occur and disciplinary action may result;
- 5.8.3. Where a staff member has a work related difference of opinion with another staff member, or in the event of any other work related conflict, staff should contact their immediate manager, who should take appropriate steps to deal with the matter, including face to face discussions with the other staff member. Such communications to managers are welcomed and supported by Taratahi.
- 5.8.4. Staff are also reminded that as well as obligations within work time to other staff, their conduct outside of work may have the ability to effect Taratahi, and must take care to ensure that their conduct outside of work, does not affect their employment relationship with Taratahi. Where an issue arises as to conduct outside the workplace, an investigation will occur, and disciplinary action may result, if that conduct has the ability to affect either Taratahi, or the employee's ability to perform their duties for the organisation.

5.9. Alcohol and Drugs (see policy 19)

- 5.9.1. Staff must not consume alcohol on campus without authorisation from the CEO or their delegate (for example, a staff member's birthday or other celebration). Such consumption of alcohol shall be appropriate in the circumstances. Where consumption is not appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken.
- 5.9.2. Staff must not, at any time, bring drugs onto any property associated with Taratahi, and a breach of this clause may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal;
- 5.9.3. In the event that any member of staff considers that any student is affected by drugs and or alcohol while on campus, they must immediately contact their immediate manager, or failing them, another member of the Senior Management Team. A failure to do so, may result in an investigation and potential disciplinary action;

- 5.9.4. Any staff potentially under the influence of a substance (alcohol, drugs) may be required to undergo a test to confirm otherwise.

5.10. Internet Policy (See also Policy 16)

- 5.10.1. Taratahi staff are permitted use of the internet during work time, therefore such use will be guided by this policy. A failure to follow this policy, may result in an investigation and potential disciplinary action;
- 5.10.2. The internet is primarily a resource for work related activity and research. Any use outside of those purposes, such as for checking personal emails, must be reasonable, and never interfere with any member of staff's obligations as an employee to perform their duties properly.
- 5.10.3. Staff must never access pornographic, offensive, or illegal websites or pages from Taratahi's internet facilities, and any such use may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

5.11. Finances (see also Policy 9)

- 5.11.1. As a provider of educational services and the recipient of both private and government funds, all Taratahi staff have obligations, where they are involved in handling monies or financial documents (whether receiving payments direct from students, for example for field trips), or as part of their day to day role, of utmost good faith and honesty.
- 5.11.2. All monies received should be appropriately accounted for, and if any member of staff has any query over any aspect of this financial policy, they must immediately direct any query to their immediate manager for action.
- 5.11.3. A failure to act with utmost good faith and honesty will be fully investigated and disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal could result.

5.12. Educational Delivery and Assessing

- 5.12.1. Staff need to be aware that they must act impartially, objectively, and with integrity when teaching, assessing or marking work completed by students.
- 5.12.2. A failure to act impartially, objectively and with integrity in relation to educational delivery, marking or assessing students work, will be fully investigated and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal could result.