

# STUDENT GUIDANCE, SUPPORT, DISCIPLINE AND COMPLAINTS

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre QMS Component			
Category:	STUDENT SYSTEMS	Policy Number:	QMS 12
Title:	Student Guidance, Support, Discipline and Complaints	Date Approved:	17 Oct 2003
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## 1. PURPOSE

Students are key stakeholders of Taratahi. As such it is essential that appropriate systems be in place to support students, address disciplinary and complaint matters.

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This is an organisational wide procedure.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Education Delivery Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

## 5. THE PROCEDURE

### 5.1. Student Guidance and Support

A range of guidance and support systems are available to students in order to ensure that a safe, caring and supportive environment is created for students, which meets individual needs and provides for personal development.

The following services are available to full time students based at the Masterton Campus

Chaplaincy, counseling, life skills support, student health, employment assistance, recreation facilities, dining room, student council.

5.1.1. **Programme/Course Selection Advice:** The Course Coordinators and marketing team provide academic enrolment advice relating to which programme is best suited to individual students.

5.1.2. **Disability Support:** As part of the Orientation interview process students are asked to identify any disability which needs to be made known to staff or for which students may require special assistance. These may include mobility, sight and literacy related issues. This is

also a part of the enrolment application form. The Education Delivery Manager acts as the Equal Educational Opportunity staff member and as such ensures that any student with a disability is catered for

**5.1.3. Life skills Component**

Banking and Nutritional education is offered as part of the Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture programme.

Where there is a request for Defensive Driving, Young Farmers Club and gun safety/licenses can be arranged

Where there is a need Drug and alcohol educators, the police, traffic safety officers, family planning or grief counseling and specialists will be engaged to work with students

**5.1.4. Equal Educational Opportunities (E Ed O) Staff Member**

The Education Delivery Manager acts as the E Ed O staff member and works to foster a learning environment, which is fair and equitable for all students. If students have concerns about discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation they can consult with the E Ed O staff member for guidance and support to deal with the discrimination. This also includes any aspects of bullying or harassment which may occur.

**5.1.5. Student Health**

Fully serviced first aid kits are to be provided at all Teaching locations and on all vehicles. During work hours the receptionist and course coordinators manage student health related issues, while the Residential Supervisor provides first line service for any students who have health related issues outside of these times. Taratahi Administration staff organize doctors appointments and travel for students requiring professional health services.

Regular visits from a health professional will be provided to residential campus's

Where students are unavailable for timetabled programmes, due to the student being unwell, the student is required to notify the office as soon as practicable of their illness. This information is recorded on the whiteboard in the office. The office staff member to whom the student has reported as being sick passes this information on to the Operations Manager who will check on the student's health including monitoring during the day. If the student is unable to go to the office, due to illness, they need to attempt to have another student on their behalf sign them in as being sick at the office.

All staff are required as soon as practicable to notify the office of any student absenteeism from normal timetabled programme. These notified absentees are checked off against students who have notified the office of their illness or absence. The office staff/residential managers will co-ordinate a doctor's visit for students, where required, and administer general medication after an initial assessment of the

student's health. All medication administered must be documented in the appropriate medication book in the office. Where a student has registered at the office as being sick or where the student has been identified as being absent from their timetabled programme, a staff member will go and see the student as soon as practicably possible to do further checks on the student.

**5.1.6. Literacy and Numeracy assistance**

Literacy and Numeracy assistance is required for some students to complete the academic requirements. Academic tutors make themselves available at regular intervals for this, both during normal working hours and after hour assistance. Emphasis is on enhancing the chances of students' success with their courses. Students can self-refer or be referred by their tutor.

Reader / Writer assistance is also available for any tests or examinations.

In addition students can be directed to L and N tutors off campus.

**5.1.7. Employment Assistance**

Course coordinators co-ordinate a referral system whereby potential employers contact Taratahi for the employment of their graduates. The Education Manager advertises these positions to potential graduates and assists students with employment agreements.

**5.1.8. Recreation Facilities (Masterton)**

The recreation facilities include a gymnasium, a games room and a Lounge with SKY T.V.

**5.1.9. Dining Room(Masterton)**

Breakfast, Lunch and Tea are provided for all Hostel students 7 days per week in the Dining Room. Lunch is provided for all off campus students as well.

**5.1.10. Student Council(Masterton)**

The student body votes at the start of each year for the formation of a student council normally comprising of 6 students and 2 staff representatives. 2 of the 6 students are normally from the July intake. The student council meet on a monthly basis and meetings are based around student and institutional initiatives.

**5.2. Student Discipline**

5.2.1. The aim of Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre discipline policy is to ensure that all students live and work in an environment which enables them to make full use of the opportunities the Centre offers. A set of rules to achieve this is issued to each student at the commencement of a course and full explanations are made.

5.2.2. All staff are responsible for maintaining the day-to-day discipline of the student body. Where actions and activities occur that are deemed

warranted to be passed on for further action or recording these are addressed by completing an incident report on the appropriate form and handed to the Education Delivery Manager.

- 5.2.3. The Education Delivery Manager acts as the Proctor for Taratahi and as such centralizes all issues relating to student discipline. When an incident report is received, indicating an action or inaction of a student, the Operations Manager talks first with the staff member reporting the incident, does further investigatory work where appropriate and then sets up a meeting with the student involved to discuss the issue and outline the implications.
- 5.2.4. Where the incident is believed to be serious enough, the Education Delivery Manager may recommend a Disciplinary Committee be established.
- 5.2.5. The Disciplinary Committee shall normally consist of a senior manager, , a student council member and a senior staff member. A minimum of three of the above shall be deemed as sufficient for any individual Disciplinary Committee Meeting. See Disciplinary Committee Guidelines for further information.
- 5.2.6. The Education Delivery Manager shall be responsible for recording all matters relating to Student discipline, including all incident reports and a disciplinary Data Base.

### **5.3. Discipline Committee Guidelines**

- 5.3.1. **Aim**  
To consider serious breaches of Taratahi rules and to determine suitable penalties.
- 5.3.2. **Composition**  
Minimum of three of the following:  
Senior Manager  
Staff member  
Student Council representative
- 5.3.3. **Students**  
Any student called before a Discipline Committee should be entitled to bring a support person with him or her. This may be a staff member, a student, or a member of the student's family.
- 5.3.4. **Organisation**  
Every member of the Discipline Committee must be notified in writing of the upcoming meeting.

For students under 18 all efforts should be made to contact the parents of the student by phone prior to a disciplinary committee meeting.

Sufficient notice should be given to make attendance by parents practicable if desired.

#### 5.3.5. Meeting

The chairperson of the Discipline Committee should be clearly identified. This would normally be a senior manager.

Prior to the meeting commencing the Committee must be made aware of the following:

- Confidentiality (especially the student council member).
- Need to hear each student's case fairly and without bias.
- Decision must be made and each member is expected to contribute.
- Decisions must be made with regard to the Taratahi rules and with regards to previous committee decisions.
- Due consideration must be given to Taratahi's legal position.

#### 5.3.6. Operation of Meeting

The student would be invited in to the meeting, together with support person.

- i. Introduced to the committee (in particular Board).
- ii. Made fully aware that it is a Discipline Committee Meeting, why it is being held, and what will come out of it.
- iii. e.g. "The Discipline Committee is meeting to consider an incident that occurred in the hostels on Saturday night, as reported by the Hostel Supervisors. The Committee will hear from yourself and has a written report. The Committee will then decide if the incident did occur and if it breaches Taratahi rules what penalties should be applied."
- iv. The student should then be asked to give their account. They should be allowed to give this fully, and then it can be opened up for questioning.
- v. Go round each Committee member and give them an opportunity to question/comment.
- vi. When this has occurred, ask the student and their support person if there is anything they wish to add, check that no-one on the Committee has anything further to ask.
- vii. Ask the student and support person to wait outside, advising them that the Committee will now discuss the matter, decide on process / penalties to follow.

viii. At this stage the decision may be clear-cut, or there may be issues requiring further clarification. Where-ever possible, the report writer should be on hand, so due consideration should be given to this when setting the meeting.

ix. Making decisions, deciding penalties

- (a) The first issue to be clarified must be, what Taratahi rule has been broken e.g.. alcohol on campus.
- (b) Then the committee should be advised of what penalties have been applied in the past. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Committee
- (c) Using "b" as a base, the Committee should decide on a suitable penalty. Every Committee member should have an opportunity to discuss this and have their input.

5.3.7. The student should then be advised. In some instances this is best done by the whole Committee, or it may be more appropriate for the Chairperson to do this.

5.3.8. A full written report on the meeting must be completed as soon as practicable after the event.

Students must be advised in writing of the Committee's decision and a copy sent to parents.

Staff and parents must be notified as soon as practicable.

5.3.9. **General**

The whole process must be transparent, i.e. every step must take place, and must be documented.

Staff (and students) should be encouraged to refrain from passing sentence prior to the Committee meeting as they may be totally unaware of the facts.

#### **5.4. Guidelines for Incidents - Hostel Related**

5.4.1. Possession of illegal substances on campus:

- (a) Expulsion from the hostels must follow.
- (b) Suspension from the course for 1-2 weeks.
- (c) A decision on ongoing attendance of the course should be made based on:
  - time left to complete
  - behavior, using the previous reports, decisions and related issues, not hearsay.

5.4.2. Possession of alcohol on campus:

- (a) Suspension from the course for 1-2 weeks must follow.
- (b) Expulsion from the hostels would not normally occur unless the students had been warned previously (in writing) or unless there

were extenuating circumstances such as damage to property, threats to other students or staff

- (c) Alcohol found in vehicles on Campus - If it is presumed that alcohol was not brought onto campus deliberately (for drinking on Campus) then alcohol should be confiscated and Campus punishments instigated.

- 5.4.3. If any other person has been put in danger through their actions, then expulsion should follow

## **5.5. Damage to property/injury to other students**

- 5.5.1. Penalties will need to be decided on a case by case basis with regard to previous decisions

## **5.6. Guidelines for Incidents - Education Related**

### **5.6.1. Dangerous Actions**

Each case will need to be determined on an individual basis, however where a student's actions are clearly putting other students or staff in danger, then expulsion may be necessary.

### **5.6.2. Other Penalties**

The Committee need to decide what is most appropriate for each particular circumstance. The use of behavioural contracts, special conditions, getting family involved should all be supported if suitable.

- 5.6.3. Every decision the Committee makes must be made with an expectation that a legal challenge may be made against Taratahi. This should in no way stop the Discipline Committee from effectively managing student discipline providing due consideration is given to the factors outlined above.

## **5.7. Student Complaints**

These guidelines set out the procedures for stakeholders to follow if they wish to complain about the job performance or behavior of a staff member or components of the organisation.

### **5.7.1. Complaints Procedures**

- All complaints are directed to the Chief Executive Officer for action, although in some instances they may have been channeled through the Board of Trustees.
- Complaints must be made in writing.
- The Centre operates a number of mechanisms both formal and informal through which complaints or concerns can be channeled.

Complaints will probably arise from:

- Students - about course content a staff member or actions / inactions of the organisation.
- The Public / parents - about student behavior, or some aspect of course content or administration.
- Staff - about student behavior or management/administration concerns.

5.7.2. Stakeholders can voice concerns individually to the Chief Executive Officer, to a staff member, or through the Student Council

5.7.3. The Chief Executive Officer shall answer all written concerns within one week.

5.7.4. All written complaints and corresponding responses must be placed in the Complaints file, located in the administration building. All complaints are to be treated seriously with investigations carried out.

5.7.5. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that both the complainant and the person for whom the complaint was against are notified of the outcome of the investigation.

5.7.6. Public concerns are directed to the Chief Executive Officer or Trust Board. The person complaining is generally invited to meet with management to discuss the complaint with action then taken as required.

5.7.7. Staff complaints can be made individually to the Chief Executive Officer or section manager.

5.7.8. Students are advised in the handbook of avenues open to them, and this is reiterated throughout the year.

5.7.9. **Complaints and NZQA**

- The NZQA has its own complaints mechanism.
- Students who have a complaint regarding a NZQA registered and/or approved and accredited provider such as Taratahi are advised, in the first instance, to raise the matter with the provider's management. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, they may approach the NZQA.
- NZQA prefers complaints to be in writing and stated as specifically as possible - that is, what the problem is and what has already been done to obtain resolution. It is also helpful if any copies of relevant documents are provided.
- For advice about lodging complaints, telephone: 0800 QA HELP (0800 72 4357)
- The Authority will investigate and advise both the complainant and the provider of the outcome of the complaint.

If a provider has a complaint about AAA (Approval, Accreditation and Audit), again they should first take it up with the manager of AAA. If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily, then the provider should contact the office of the Chief Executive of the Authority.

- AAA is the NZQA unit responsible for providing an external check of the quality of the courses and qualifications.