

POLICY 1.13

ISSUE AND GREIVENCE RESOLUTION POLICY - EXTERNAL

Policy statement

The Reach Foundation (Reach) is committed to improving the wellbeing of young people so they can be healthy and resilient to meet life's challenges, and fulfil their potential. We aim to provide a healthy, safe and supportive environment for young people involved in our programs, and to foster good relationships with our external stakeholders.

Reach will take all possible steps to ensure that Reach employees and volunteers behave professionally and with the wellbeing of young people in mind at all times. However, there may be occasions when a person external to Reach feels a need to raise an issue or register a grievance about Reach procedures, activities or material, or the conduct of a Reach employee or volunteer.

This policy lays out the principles that guide Reach's handling of issues and grievances, and the process that an external party should follow so that the matter can be dealt with appropriately by Reach.

The Issue and Grievance Resolution Policy will be made available to the public by being posted on Reach's website. The policy must be made available to anyone external to Reach who requests to see it, and who wants to raise an issue or lodge a grievance.

Document control			
Policy Owner:	HR Manager	Next Review Date:	3 years
Approver:	Management / CLT	Version No:	1
Date last version approved:	30/10/2014	Date this version approved:	30/10/2014

Related documentation

Reach Code of Conduct
1.06 Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy
1.14 Bullying and Harassment Policy
1.12 Issue and Grievance Resolution Policy - Internal
1.18 Whistleblower Policy

Definitions

Employee – any individual who works with Reach on a permanent, fixed term contract, sessional or casual basis.

External party – for the purposes of this policy “external party” means any individual who is external to Reach who has an issue or grievance they want to raise with Reach regarding Reach procedures, activities or material, or the conduct of a Reach employee or volunteer.

Grievance - a formal written complaint that the individual wants investigated and where they request a formal response to be made to them. A grievance should include details of what has occurred, relevant date(s), any witnesses and any other details that are relevant to the matter.

Issue – a concern relating to Reach activities or the conduct of Reach employees that is heard and addressed via informal/local resolution, and where the concern is not escalated to a formal grievance.

Volunteer – any individual who works with Reach on a voluntary (unpaid) basis. This includes Board members, supporters, corporate supporters and volunteers.

Operating principles

The aim of this policy is to provide any external party with information and guidelines to ensure that their issue or grievance will be given due consideration, and will be addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

This policy also provides an opportunity to improve our participant and stakeholder experience by identifying areas of risk and areas for improvement.

Principles underpinning response to issues or grievances

Grievance management at Reach is guided by the following seven principles:

Conciliatory, constructive and local self resolution preferred	<p>Consistent with Reach’s values of honesty, integrity, connection and respect, Reach has a strong preference that all parties will engage in issue resolution with a respectful, conciliatory and constructive style.</p> <p>It is Reach’s preference that issues are resolved through local self resolution where possible, and that escalation to formal complaint/grievance only occurs after local resolution efforts have been exhausted.</p>
Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness	<p>The principles of natural justice will be followed in management of all grievances. These principles are designed to protect all parties.</p> <p>If an issue or grievance is directed at a person, this person should be treated as innocent unless any allegations are proved to be true.</p> <p>Any allegations should be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and relevant information clearly documented..</p> <p>Any allegations will be put to the person they are made against, and this person must be given a chance to explain his or her version of events.</p> <p>Any disciplinary action involved must be commensurate with the seriousness of the matter, and mitigating factors should be taken into account when assessing if disciplinary action is necessary.</p> <p>There should be no reprisals or recriminations against a person raising an issue, lodging a grievance or helping someone raise an issue under this policy. Should a complainant be found to have lodged an unsubstantiated complaint so as to cause vexation to the respondent, Reach will consider disciplinary action against the complainant.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>The issue resolution process will ensure complainant confidentiality and also ensure confidentiality for other parties involved. Details of the matter should only be known by those directly concerned.</p>
Neutrality	<p>Impartiality towards everyone involved is critical, including the way that people are treated throughout the process. The person in charge of managing the issue or grievance resolution process must not have been directly involved in the matter. They must also avoid any personal or professional bias.</p>

Support	Both the complainant and the respondent may have the assistance of a support person if they so choose. Note that under normal circumstances any support person's role is to provide emotional support to the individual during the process, not to speak or advocate on their behalf. If a party proposes their support person to play a different role in the process, they must make the other party aware of this prior to any discussion in which that person will be present.
Timely and effective management	Grievances will be responded to quickly and effectively, to minimise the impact on all parties involved.
Ethical practice	Consistent with its ethical and legal obligations, Reach will report suspected crimes to the appropriate authorities.

Issue and grievance resolution process (external)

If an external party has an issue they wish to raise or a grievance they want to register regarding a Reach procedure, activity or material, or the conduct of a Reach employee or volunteer, they should follow the procedures as outlined below.

Local self resolution

When an issue arises, if the external party feels able, they are encouraged to try resolving the issue personally at an early and informal stage as follows:

- with their designated Reach contact, or
- with the relevant department manager in the first instance, to identify the most appropriate Reach employee to speak with. To find the relevant department manager, contact Reach's reception: Melbourne (03) 9412 0900 / Sydney (02) 8218 9200.

Informal resolution does not require the issue or complaint to be documented.

When raising their issue with their designated Reach contact or relevant department manager, the external party should:

1. Ensure they can clearly articulate the nature, details and facts of the issue;
2. If appropriate, describe the effect the issue is having or has had;
3. Aim for conciliation, not assigning blame;
4. Make a clear request regarding the resolution being sought;
5. Be ready to provide any relevant documents for the discussion if it is considered that these have not been adhered to (eg, agreement, agreed actions); and
6. Seek a resolution that is clearly agreed between the parties.

The designated Reach contact or relevant department manager is responsible for monitoring the situation and overseeing completion of any agreed actions to ensure the issue has been satisfactorily resolved with the external party.

Escalation – formal grievance resolution

A formal resolution process should be followed if:

1. an attempt at self resolution is unsuccessful – eg, the agreements made are not followed, or the external party is unsatisfied with the outcomes of the local self resolution process; or
2. the matter is inappropriate for self resolution; or
3. the issue escalates in seriousness; or
4. the matter becomes a significant risk to health and safety; or
5. the matter involves serious misconduct.

The external party raising the grievance should communicate their concern in writing, to the relevant Reach department manager. The external party should include the substance of their grievance, any steps that have been taken to resolve the issue to date and the outcome they seek.

Manager [Department name] (Private & Confidential)
The Reach Foundation
152-156 Wellington St
Collingwood, VIC 3066.

The receipt of a formal complaint will be acknowledged in a timely fashion and will provide some indication of next steps. The complainant will be contacted for further information as part of the investigation process.

The relevant department manager will inform the CEO and the relevant department manager. These individuals will agree how the matter will be responded to, including appropriate actions, responsibilities, and related timing. Depending on the nature of the grievance, it may be necessary to involve other parties in the investigation and/or resolution process.

Mediation with all relevant parties by an independent mediator is one option that can be considered to facilitate resolution of a grievance.

Appropriate actions, responsibilities, and timeframes will be agreed, and documented. The department manager is responsible for overseeing completion of the agreed actions.

The outcome / response will be communicated in writing to the external party who made the complaint.

The department manager will follow up with the relevant external party to confirm that the outcome / response has resolved the matter from the external party's perspective.

If the grievance cannot be resolved via the process above, the issue can be escalated to the CEO, and the Board Chairman if necessary.

Reporting to the Board

The HR Manager will report to the Board on any grievances in the calendar year to date, identifying the number, status and broad nature of the grievance. Grievances will be identified as internal or external as applicable, and will be described in broad terms only.