

# Friends of Black Rock High Rock Grievance Policy

## PRINCIPLES

- Grievances should be treated seriously and sensitively, having due regard to procedural fairness, and confidentiality and privacy. Requirements relating to confidentiality and privacy extend to the use and storage of any information and records related to a grievance.
- Grievances should be handled quickly and as close as possible to their source. This may be modified by the nature of the grievance and the staff member's wishes. Staff should raise concerns as early as possible after the incident/s occurred.
- Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation. The aim is to reach an acceptable outcome that minimizes any potential detriment to ongoing relationships.
- Both the staff member raising the grievance (the complainant) and the person against whom the grievance is made (the respondent) will receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance. Parties may bring a support person to any interview.
- No person should be victimized because they raise a complaint or are associated with a grievance.
- Staff should not instigate grievances that are frivolous or malicious. All staff are expected to participate in the grievance resolution process in good faith.

## PROCEDURES

### Preliminary Action

Before initiating the grievance procedures, the complainant will try to resolve any grievance directly with the person/s concerned. If this is not possible or appropriate, the complainant should proceed to Step 1 of these Procedures.

### Step 1 - Talk to the immediate supervisor

Where the complainant has been unable to resolve the grievance on his or her own, they should take the matter up with their immediate supervisor. Where the grievance involves that person, the complainant should refer the matter to the next most appropriate member of staff, e.g. the Board of Directors or NCA Manager if dealing directly with a BLM project.

The supervisor should address the grievance with a view to resolving it expeditiously, normally within two weeks of receiving the complaint. This would usually involve the supervisor:

- a) carefully listening to the staff member's concerns and their desired outcomes;
- b) providing the staff member with a copy of this document, explaining the grievance procedures and the range of options open to them;

- c) keeping all those involved informed about the progress of the matter; and
- d) monitoring the situation during and after the resolution process.

In any action taken the supervisor should ensure procedural fairness for all parties involved, which would normally include such steps as fully informing the respondent of the allegations made against them and providing them with an opportunity to respond.

At the end of their direct involvement with the matter, the supervisor should make appropriate file notes on the grievance resolution process and outcomes, which should be stored in a separate and confidential grievance file.

### **Step 2 - Referral to a senior manager**

If the complainant believes the grievance has not been resolved to their satisfaction during Step 1, they can refer the matter to the VISTA state office. The state office may require the complainant to put the grievance in writing. The state office will consult with the site supervisor before taking any action and would then normally try to resolve the matter within three weeks of receiving the grievance, following similar processes outlined in Step 1.

## **OUTCOMES**

Outcomes will vary from case to case depending on the nature and circumstances of each grievance. Outcomes could include:

- the complainant gaining a better understanding of the situation and no longer feeling aggrieved;
- the complainant receiving a verbal or written apology;
- the respondent receiving a verbal or written reprimand;
- one or both parties agreeing to participate in some form of counseling;

Disciplinary action may also be taken where:

- a grievance is found to have been malicious or vexatious;
- a person victimizes another person because of their involvement in the grievance;
- unnecessary disclosure of information (a breach of confidentiality) has occurred.