

Reef Scuba Disputes Procedure



Policy

- Reef Scuba Dive Club and school are committed to providing high quality training and services to all its members and students. It aims to provide a supportive environment and to be responsive to concerns when they are raised.
- It is recognised that problems may arise of a learning and development related nature, or service related nature. Those problems need addressing in order to ensure that normal high standards are maintained. Dealing with small problems or areas of concern as they arise will often prevent them becoming larger and harder to resolve ones. Members and students are encouraged therefore to raise any issue of dissatisfaction, at an early stage, so that they can be dealt with effectively. Reef undertakes to take seriously all issues that are raised and to deal with them through processes that are timely, fair, consistent and easy to follow.
- The school defines a dispute as any specific concern about facilitated learning related or service related provision or a breach of the Equity policy or Disability statement. Members and students are advised to use the informal mechanisms for resolving such concerns before they invoke the formal disputes procedure. The informal processes are outlined below.
- Both the Club and school are concerned that individuals should feel able to raise any grievance and to be aware that no member or student will be penalised for doing so unless the dispute is untrue and not made in good faith.
- Where a dispute involves opposing parties, Reef is under a duty to act fairly towards both parties and this duty must follow the procedure adopted by the Club and school.

Who to contact

- In the first instance contact the DM/AI, Instructor or Club Secretary. If they are unable to resolve the issue the matter may be referred to the Chairman as are issues such as breaches of the Club's Rules, Equity Policy, Disability statement or PADI guidelines.

Informal ways of resolving issues

- Most concerns can be resolved informally and it is the responsibility of the member or student to bring forward issues at the time they arise and to try and resolve them through informal means.

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- Informal resolution is taken to mean by agreement with appropriate Club officials without having recourse to the formal procedure described below.
- The responsibilities of the Club and school are to ensure, as far as possible, that:
 - The process for responding to issues of concern or dissatisfaction raised by members and students is clear.
 - DMs, AIs, and Instructors are accessible and approachable for those who wish to raise concerns in the context of the school environment.
 - Concerns are dealt with promptly, sympathetically and with respect for privacy and confidentiality.
 - Issues are considered and outcomes reported in an appropriate manner, e.g. through personal contact or via e-mail, letter.

Formal disputes

- The formal procedure may be invoked for problems that are too serious to be dealt with informally such as abusive behaviour, any action likely to cause injury to, or impair the safety of members and students, and unauthorised disclosure of confidential information to a third party. It may also be invoked for problems where there has been a serious but unsuccessful attempt at informal resolution. At all times, people will be encouraged to resolve disputes informally before invoking the formal dispute procedure.
- The member or student should submit their dispute in writing with any relevant evidence to the Chairman of Reef Scuba. This should be submitted within a reasonable period of the subject of the dispute occurring. Reasonable period is defined for School and Club purposes as 3 months. The complainant will not be disadvantaged if they have delayed submitting the notification in order to seek informal resolution of the dispute. A third party may submit a dispute on behalf of the member who is under the age of 18. In addition if either party is under 18 years of age, they will be advised of their right to be accompanied by a parent (or guardian) to help them present their case.
- Where the dispute is against the Chairman the issue should be dealt with by a quorum of Committee members.
- In any event, the Chairman will, within 5 working days of the receipt of the dispute, send a letter or e-mail of acknowledgement to the complainant which will:

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- Indicate whether or not the disputes procedure is appropriate, including an explanation if it is deemed inappropriate.
 - Where it is appropriate to operate the disputes procedure, outline the sequence of meetings/actions and approximate timetable to be followed in order to investigate the dispute and reach a conclusion. Such timetable and process will be sufficient to ensure that a reasoned judgement is possible while recognising the desirability of a speedy outcome.
- Once investigations have been undertaken and a conclusion has been reached, the Chairman will communicate the outcome verbally to the parties wherever possible, and in writing within 5 days. If the dispute is upheld this will include an indication of the appropriate redress. If the dispute is rejected, this will include:
- The reason for the decision.
 - The option to pursue a complaint to PADI in the context of the dive school operation.