**RIBBLE VALLEY ACROBATIC ACADEMY**

**Grievance Policy & Procedure**

Ribble Valley Acrobatic Academy (“the organisation”) believes that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect. Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including your working environment or conditions or the way in which you have been managed or treated. The grievance procedure is designed to ensure that employees’ grievances are dealt with in a fair and effective manner and, where possible, that such matters are resolved quickly. The organisation recognises that a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated with respect.

**Informal Resolution**

If you are unhappy about treatment that you have received or about any aspect of your work, you should discuss this with your line manager, who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. If you feel unable to approach your line manager directly, you should approach HR, who will discuss ways of dealing with the matter with you.

**Formal Grievance**

Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure. A formal grievance should be concerned with the way in which you believe you have been treated by the organisation or directors or managers acting on its behalf, or about any aspect of your work.

**Allegations of Misconduct**

Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure not under the grievance procedure.

**Complaints about Disciplinary Action**

Complaints that you may have about any disciplinary action taken against you should be dealt with as an appeal under the disciplinary procedure. Insofar as a grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

**Accessibility**

If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need other assistance, you should raise this issue with your line manager in the first instance or HR.

**The right to be accompanied**

You have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or, if you are a trade union member, a trade union official at any grievance meeting or subsequent appeal. The choice of companion is a matter for you. Please note that individual workers are not obliged to agree to accompany you. At any hearing or appeal hearing, your chosen companion will be allowed to address the meeting, respond on your behalf to any view expressed in the hearing, and sum up the case on your behalf. However, both the hearing and appeal hearing are essentially meetings between the organisation and you, so any questions put directly to you should be dealt with by you and not your companion. Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal, the meeting will be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date.

**Mediation**

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of your grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised by your grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

**Formal grievance procedure**

**Making the complaint**

The first stage of the grievance procedure is for you to put your complaint **in writing**. This written statement will form the basis of the subsequent hearing and any investigations, so **it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome that you are seeking.** If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place. Your complaint should be headed **"Formal grievance"** and sent to your line manager. If your complaint relates to the way in which you believe your line manager is treating you, the complaint should be sent to HR.

Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, depending on the nature of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may insist on the matter proceeding to a full grievance hearing.

Before proceeding to a full grievance hearing, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made by you, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected, wherever possible. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, you will be given a copy in advance of the hearing for you to consider your response. In exceptional circumstances, evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to you.

**The grievance hearing**

The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable. It will be conducted by a manager or director and may also be attended by an HR representative. At the meeting, you will be asked to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. The meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

You should ensure you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence. You may be required to produce evidence as to why you are unable to attend.

While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to

matters that are directly relevant to your complaint. Focusing on irrelevant issues or incidents that took place long before the matters in hand is not helpful and can hinder the effective handling of your complaint. The manager conducting the hearing will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. The manager may also intervene to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of your complaint.

Following the conclusion of the grievance hearing stage, you should be informed in writing of the outcome within 10 working days and told of any action that the organisation proposes to take as a result of your complaint. You may discuss this outcome informally with your manager. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal appeal.

**Appeal**

Your appeal should be made **in writing** to the manager who conducted the initial grievance hearing. You should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. This must be done within 10 working days of receipt of the written notification of the outcome of the grievance. An appeal meeting will then be arranged to take place as soon as reasonably practicable following the submission of your formal appeal.

You should ensure you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager of this as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence. You may be required to produce evidence as to why you are unable to attend.

The appeal hearing will be conducted by a senior manager or director who, as far as possible, is different to the manager who originally decided the grievance. He/she will consider the grounds you have put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was reasonable. An appropriately qualified third party may be appointed by the organisation to conduct the appeal hearing. Following the appeal meeting, you should be informed of the outcome in writing within 10 working days. **The outcome of the appeal meeting is final.**