GVHS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The grievance process is intended to provide a structured, fair, and orderly method for resolving disputes within the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society (GVHS).

The GVHS Grievance Committee is established to privately and fairly evaluate the validity of grievances submitted in accordance with this procedure. The Committee is responsible for reviewing grievances, conducting investigations as appropriate, and providing findings and recommendations to the Adjudication Committee.

The Adjudication Committee reviews the findings and recommendations of the Grievance Committee to ensure they are appropriate and consistent with GVHS policies and procedures.

The Grievance Committee will only take official action when a formal grievance has been received.

GRIEVANCE TYPES

Informal Complaint

If a member feels there is an error on a registration, a transfer, show points or any other day-to-day business issue, the procedure is to first contact the GVHS office at gvhs@vanners.org or by telephone at 1-888-520-9777, Extension 2.

Most of these types of complaints may be simple errors or misunderstandings and can often be resolved administratively.

If this type of issue cannot be resolved administratively, it may proceed as a Formal Grievance.

Formal Grievance

1. Filing Requirements

The complainant must submit:

- A completed GVHS Formal Grievance Form;

- Supporting documentation and evidence; and
- The required $100 filing fee.

Submission of a grievance and filing fee does not automatically result in referral to the Grievance Committee. Each grievance is subject to an initial administrative review before referral.

2. Initial Administrative Review

Upon receipt of a formal grievance, the Executive Director, or another individual designated by GVHS when appropriate, will conduct an initial administrative review to determine whether the grievance meets the threshold requirements necessary to proceed to the Grievance Committee.

The initial review is intended to determine whether the matter is appropriate for the formal grievance process. It is not an investigation or determination of the ultimate merits of the grievance.

Before a grievance is referred to the Grievance Committee, the following criteria will be considered:

a. Jurisdiction — Whether the matter falls within GVHS's authority and the scope of the grievance process, including whether the respondent and subject matter are subject to applicable GVHS rules, bylaws, policies, or procedures.

b. Identified Violation — Whether the grievance identifies a specific GVHS rule, bylaw, policy, procedure, or other applicable requirement alleged to have been violated.

c. Factual Basis — Whether the grievance alleges sufficient facts which, if established, could constitute the identified violation.

d. Supporting Information — Whether sufficient documentation, evidence, or other information has been provided to support further review or investigation of the allegations.

e. Procedural Efficiency — Whether the matter is appropriately addressed through the formal grievance process or should instead be resolved or referred through another GVHS administrative, committee, policy, or dispute-resolution process.

3. Initial Review Outcomes

Following the initial administrative review, the grievance will be handled in one of the following ways:

a. Accepted for Referral
If the grievance satisfies the threshold requirements for formal review, it will be referred to the Grievance Committee for investigation in accordance with this procedure.

b. Administrative or Other Referral
If the matter is more appropriately addressed as an administrative complaint or under another GVHS policy, procedure, or committee jurisdiction, the complainant will be notified and the matter will be redirected accordingly.

c. Additional Information Required
If additional information is reasonably necessary to determine whether the grievance satisfies the threshold requirements, the complainant may be asked to provide additional information within a specified period of time.

d. Dismissal A grievance may be dismissed at the initial administrative review stage when one or more of the threshold requirements necessary to proceed are not satisfied. A grievance dismissed at this stage will not be referred to the Grievance Committee for investigation. The complainant will receive written notice of the dismissal.

4. Referral to the Grievance Committee

If a grievance satisfies the initial review requirements:

> The grievance will be referred to the Grievance Committee and served upon the respondent. The respondent will have thirty (30) days to submit a written response and supporting documentation.

RESOLUTIONS

Informal Resolutions

If the respondent resolves the matter with the complainant, written confirmation may be submitted to the committee, and the matter will be closed. Documentation will remain on file.

If the complainant determines the matter has been resolved, they may submit a written request to withdraw the grievance. The committee will close the matter and retain documentation consistent with record retention policies.

Formal Resolution/Investigation

5. Investigation and Required Participation

The Grievance Committee may review documents, verify information and witness statements, conduct recorded video interviews or conferences with the parties and witnesses, request additional information, and determine whether a formal hearing is necessary.

Complainants and respondents are expected to cooperate with reasonable requests necessary to complete the investigation, including requests for documents, information, and participation in scheduled interviews or conferences.

All formal investigative interviews or conferences will be recorded and maintained as part of the grievance record.

A complainant's failure or refusal to participate in required investigative procedures may result in dismissal and closure of the grievance when the Committee is unable to complete its investigation as a result.

A respondent's failure or refusal to participate will not prevent the grievance process from proceeding. The Committee may complete its investigation and make its recommendation based upon the information available in the record.

6. Communications During an Investigation

All administrative communications regarding a pending grievance will be coordinated through the Executive Director or other individual designated by GVHS.

Grievance Committee members will not engage in substantive communications with complainants, respondents, or witnesses regarding a pending matter outside of authorized investigative interviews, hearings, or other formal investigative communications.

Requests for status updates, procedural questions, submission of additional materials, and other administrative inquiries must be directed to the GVHS office.

Nothing in this provision prevents the Grievance Committee from contacting a party or witness when necessary to conduct its investigation.

7. Within sixty (60) days of completing its investigation or hearing, the Grievance Committee will issue a recommendation to the Adjudication committee.

8.The Adjudication committee will issue a Final Decision within thirty (30) days.

APPEALS

Right Of Appeal

Any party who disagrees with the Adjudication Committee decision may appeal to the Board of Directors.
•Appeals must be filed within 30 days
•Appeals are based on the existing record
•New evidence allowed only for good cause or extraordinary circumstances

The Board will conduct a hearing and will issue a Final Appeal Decision within 60 days. Following the hearing, the decision of the Board of Directors is final.

INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute involving GVHS directors, officers, committee members, staff, volunteers, or members regarding GVHS rules, bylaws, policies, or procedures must first be addressed through the GVHS grievance process.
Members agree to exhaust internal remedies before pursuing outside legal action.

LITIGATION PROVISIONS
Threats of litigation related to internal GVHS disputes during the grievance process may result in disciplinary action.
Such actions include dismissal of grievance or response and placement of the member on probation for one (1) year for the first offense. A second offense will result in suspension of membership for one (1) year. Each subsequent offense will result in an additional one (1) year suspension.

MEDIATION / ARBITRATION
If disputes cannot be resolved internally, mediation is required and, if still not resolved, binding arbitration must be utilized to reach a final decision, binding in the courts.

INDEMNIFICATION
GVHS shall indemnify directors, officers, committee members, and volunteers acting in good faith within the scope of their duties, consistent with GVHS bylaws and applicable law.

GVHS FORMAL GRIEVANCE FORM

This form is to be used when filing a formal grievance with the **Gypsy Vanner Horse Society (GVHS)**.

1. The form must be completed in full and signed. Incomplete forms will be returned by the committee.
2. Supporting documentation must be included.
3. The completed form and documentation should be emailed to: GVHS, gvhs@vanners.org
4. A **$100 grievance filing fee** must accompany this form.

SECTION 1 — COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name

_____

Address

_____

City _____ State/Province _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

GVHS Membership Type _____

SECTION 2 — RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Name of person(s) involved

_____

Position or role (if applicable)

_____

Relationship to GVHS (member, judge, exhibitor, etc.)

_____

_____

SECTION 3 — RULE, POLICY, OR ISSUE INVOLVED

Identify the GVHS rule, bylaw, or policy you believe has been violated.

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 4 — DESCRIPTION OF GRIEVANCE

Briefly describe the grievance.

Attach additional pages and supporting documentation as necessary.

_____

_____

_____

Date(s) of incident(s)

_____

Location (if applicable)

_____

_____

SECTION 5 — SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

List all documents or evidence included with this grievance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

SECTION 6 — REQUESTED RESOLUTION

What outcome or resolution would resolve this grievance?

_____

_____

SECTION 7 — ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

Please read and **initial** each statement.

_____ I understand the GVHS grievance process.

_____ I have reviewed the applicable GVHS rules, bylaws, policies, or procedures related to this grievance.

_____ I understand the respondent will have thirty (30) days to respond.

_____ I understand the Grievance Committee may conduct interviews or hearings as part of the investigation.

_____ I understand that the Adjudication committee will issue a Decision following the Grievance Committee recommendation.

_____ I understand that I may appeal the decision to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days, for a final decision within GVHS.

_____ I understand that disputes involving GVHS rules, policies, or governance must first be addressed through the GVHS grievance process.

_____ I understand that this grievance process is confidential, and I agree to refrain from discussing the grievance publicly while the process is ongoing.

_____ I certify that the information provided in this grievance is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE

Signature

_____

Printed Name

_____

Date

_____