



Complaint (Grievance) Policy and Procedure

New Mexico Horse Rescue at Walkin N Circles Ranch (“WNCR”) strives to promote a positive productive, learning, and social environment where all members of the community, including WNCR employees, members of the Board of Directors and volunteers work together in a mutually respectful, psychologically healthy environment.

WNCR endeavors to foster an environment that reflects courtesy, civility, and respectful communication, which is essential to our success in fulfilling the vision and mission of WNCR.

Any individual may address a concern in an open and honest manner, without fear of reprisal or retaliation. WNCR supports respectful, sincere and honest discussion of issues between parties involved in a possible conflict.

It is preferable for the disagreement to be satisfactorily resolved directly and informally between the parties involved. The complainant should discuss the situation with their immediate supervisor or with the other party involved in the conflict. If possible, the supervisor or other person(s) involved and the complainant will resolve the disagreement.

However, in instances where an informal discussion does not clear the issue, a formal procedure is needed for dispute resolution. This complaint procedure is the mechanism by which an employee, board member, or volunteer may formally present a grievance to be heard by the WNCR Executive Director.

All grievances to be addressed through the formal process must be in writing. Using the procedure outlined and the form below, the complainant must state clearly and concisely all the known facts related to their grievance, including “who, what, where, when and the why.” They must clearly explain why they disagree with an act or omission which is the basis for the grievance. The grievant must explain what remedy they are seeking and must sign and date the grievance.

In accordance with fair and impartial due process for both the complainant and the other party, a grievant submitting an anonymous complaint will not be considered a valid request. In addition, an employee who speaks with a member of the management team about an issue, depending upon the situation, must not have the expectation that the situation will be ignored.

Grievance Procedure

Submit your grievance in writing by email or hard copy to the Executive Director. Grievances should be sufficiently detailed and include information about the following at a minimum:

- 1) who was involved in the situation
- 2) when the situation occurred, or an approximate date if the exact is unknown
- 3) a description of the incident
- 4) a description of the effect of the incident on you or others who were involved
- 5) the names of any witnesses to the incident

- 6) any attempts made to date to address the incident with the parties involved and the result of those attempts
- 7) If no attempts to address the incident prior to this grievance have been made, please explain why not.

If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the grievance may be submitted to a member of the Board's Executive Committee. The grievant may contact the ranch office at (505) 286-0779 to obtain current contact information for the Executive Committee. Grievances must be submitted within 30 calendar days following the date the grievant first knew or should have known of the grievance. If the complaint is not submitted within the 30-day period following the known date, the complainant waives their right to assert it using this process. The incident may still be brought to the attention of the Director or Executive Committee at a later date and subject to internal investigation as appropriate.

The Executive Director (or a Board Executive Committee member) will respond in writing to the grievant, either by email or written letter, within 10 days following receipt of the grievance. This response will detail the next steps to be taken – whether an investigation is necessary or if a grievance hearing will be scheduled. If no investigation is necessary, a hearing will be scheduled within 10 days of its receipt at a time and location agreed upon by all parties to the grievance. If necessary, an impartial person will investigate the complaint. The investigator will speak with both parties to the grievance, any witnesses and others who might be privy to the situation. If an investigation is conducted, the hearing may be delayed due to the gathering of information.

The Executive Director and/or members of the Board's Executive Committee will conduct the hearing, giving all parties the opportunity to present their concerns. The hearing shall be recorded, and a person appointed to take notes of the meeting and document decisions. The individuals conducting the hearing may also choose to speak with other parties named in the grievance or witnesses to the events described as appropriate, either before or after the hearing takes place. After due consideration, the Executive Director and/or members of the Board's Executive Committee will come to a decision of what, if any, disciplinary action is appropriate. Final decisions will be rendered in writing to all parties concerned.

All documentation from this situation will be kept confidential and separate from the involved parties' personnel file. Documentation of any disciplinary action taken will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

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Grievance Form

To: WNCR Executive Director (or Board Executive Committee)

From: [Your name and position with WNCR]

Date: [Date of Grievance submission]

In compliance with the WNCR Grievance Procedure, I am filing a formal grievance against [Name] who serves as [position with WNCR].

The details of my grievance are: (please add additional sheets if needed as well as supporting documents).

When did this situation happen or begin happening if there are multiple instances?

Were there witnesses to this incident?

What action, if any, have you taken to resolve this issue?

What resolution are you seeking?

Signature