Incorporating RATS Youth Theatre

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Ribchester Amateur Theatrical Society (RATS/we) tries to have high standards for everything we do, but we recognise that may not always the case. RATS take complaints, concerns, and unacceptable behaviours as covered by RATS Code of Conduct, seriously. For the purposes of this document, 'complaint' will be used to include complaints/concerns and unacceptable behaviour.

Purpose

This document sets out how complaints must be raised, handled, and resolved – for both adult and child members of RATS.

Safeguarding

Concerns involving a child's safety or wellbeing whether from within or outside of RATS must be flagged and addressed in accordance with RATS Safeguarding Policy.

Who can raise a complaint

- any member or RATS, parent/guardian or a young member, or volunteer.

In addressing a complaint, RATS will:

- provide a fair, clear and easy to use complaints procedure if anyone wishes to make a complaint or raise a concern;
- publicise it procedure so members know how to contact RATS and what to expect;
- ensure all members of RATS know what to do if a complaint is raised;
- investigate complaints fairly and promptly;
- record complaints and monitor them to help RATS improve what we do.

Confidentiality

Complaints will be treated confidentially. Information will be handled sensitively in accordance with RATS General Data Protection Regulations – Policy. Only those directly involved in the complaints process who need to access the information will have access to relevant confidential information.

How to raise a complaint

Most issues can be resolved 'informally' by talking things through with the appropriate person/party.

Anyone wishing to raise an issue that is related to rehearsals or performances, should bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Producer in the first instance.

Complaints Procedure endorsed 6th October 2026. Next review due October 2027.
Lead Committee member: Anna Flynn, Vice Chair & Welfare Officer.

If neither of the above options are acceptable or applicable to the person raising a complaint, or have failed to resolve the issue, the following procedure should be followed.

1. Send details of the complaint to the Chair of RATS Committee, via the official email address [ribchesterrats@gmail.com] and include:
    a. full name, contact details, how you wish to be contacted
    b. clear details of what happened/ what you wish to report.
    c. dates, times, locations, where applicable
    d. why you are making the complaint
    e. what you would like the Committee to consider as a way forward
    f. any related documents that support the complaint.
2. The Secretary to RATS Committee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and refer the matter to the Chair and the Welfare Officer.
3. Depending upon the nature and severity of the complaint, the next steps may include:
    a. Further information may be requested
    b. Bring both/all parties together to talk matters through, with two members of RATS Executive Committee present, as mediators
    c. Formal 1.1 interviews undertaken with both/all parties. A member of the Executive Committee (not previously involved) will undertake the interviews, in the role of recorder and reporter. The Executive Committee member will then report back to the Committee.
    d. The Committee will consider the findings of any investigation/interview and record their decision, feeding back to all parties involved.
    e. The outcome will be proportionate to what happened. Possible outcomes:
        i. No further action
        ii. Informal warning
        iii. Formal warning (written)
        iv. Restrictions on participation
        v. Membership suspension
        vi. Membership revoked
4. Right of Appeal – ether party may appeal a decision, which must be in writing to the Chair of RATS [ribchesterrats@gmail.com] within 10 working days of being informed of the outcome. RATS Committee will review the appeal.

    Note: given the size of the Committee, it may not be possible to assign Committee members to consider an appeal, who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

Timescales: RATS will endeavour to address matters in a timely manner, but as Committee members are all volunteers with other daily commitments, we are unable to specify timescales against any of the above steps.

Anonymous complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available investigated. But, in doing so RATS will be mindful that anonymous complains can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our activities, even incidentally, has a right to complain or raise a

concern and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Anyone wishing to raise a complaint is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and procedure and its implementation lies with RATS Committee.

Review

This Complaints Procedure will be reviewed periodically by the Committee to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects good practice.

Complaints Procedure endorsed 6th October 2026. Next review due October 2027.
Lead Committee member: Anna Flynn, Vice Chair & Welfare Officer.