

# POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND BARN RULES HANDBOOK

## **Ride Your Horse!**



*“Let the warmth of a horse carry you to your dreams ”*

“In a triangle all sides are equal”  
Each Side Represents a Part of Our Program

Horse  
Instructor  
Volunteers

“With all three sides being equal and valuable, we are able to inspire  
self growth in our riders.”

Welcome to Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program.  
Thank you for becoming part of our triangles of inspiration!

**Darlene Harman**  
**President/Founding Director**

**Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program**  
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### **Rider Participation**

Recognizing that equine-related activities hold inherent risks, all new and returning participants will be evaluated by our NARHA (North American Riding Handicapped Association) Certified Instructors to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. Returning participants will be reevaluated each year or as necessary for changes in medical, physical, cognitive, and behavioral status.

All riders, both disabled and able-bodied, must have a completed, signed, and dated enrollment packet. All forms must be updated annually.

Riders at Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program shall have no history of inappropriate behavior with fire or any tendencies or history of abuse or violence directed toward other people or animals.

Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program reserves the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the applicant's safety and/or the safety of the horses, volunteers, staff, property owners, or for other reasons in accordance with NARHA operating center guidelines.

***It is the responsibility of the participant or the participant's parent or guardian(s) to inform Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program of any changes in the participant's medical, physical, mental, or behavioral status. A participant is defined as a Ride Your Horse! Client, volunteer, or staff member.***

### **Disabled Riders**

Please note that horseback riding is contraindicated for some conditions/individuals. Ride Your Horse! follows the NARHA guidelines for precautions/contraindications for physical restrictions of riding. See the NARHA Guide (in the Ride Your Horse! Office) or the NARHA website at [www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org) for detailed information. Ride Your Horse! Riders must have some trunk control and be able to sit up with little or no assistance (e.g., no backriding is performed at Ride Your Horse!).

### **Weight Considerations for All Riders**

Maximum weights are listed below, but decisions regarding participation will be based on the availability of a suitable horse related to the height, weight, cognition and balance of the participant. The results of a risk/benefit analysis will also be considered. The

instructors at Ride Your Horse will make final determination for participation! TRP.

The maximum upper weight limits for disabled riders are:

- *200 lbs. for an independent rider or a rider who only needs a spotter.*
- *175 lbs. for a rider who needs a leader only or a leader and spotter only.*
- *150 lbs. for a rider who needs a leader and 1-2 sidewalkers.*

#### **Age Restrictions for Disabled Riders**

1. Children with disabilities must be at least 3 years of age.
2. Children under the age of 5 will require a leader and at least one sidewalker and will only ride at a walk.

#### **Age Restrictions For Able-bodied Riders**

1. The minimum age for able-bodied riders is 7 years of age.
2. There will be no more than 5 able-bodied riders registered and active in the program at any one time. Able-bodied riders that are affiliated with the families of Ride Your Horse! disabled riders will be given preference for these limited slots. Secondary preference will be given to Ride Your Horse! volunteers who wish to take lessons.

#### **Dress Code**

A volunteer's or student's attire and appearance should be appropriate for safe equestrian activity. For your comfort and safety, please observe the following:

1. Wear appropriate shoes – **closed-toe shoes only**. Tennis shoes are suggested for volunteers and preferably riding boots for students (must have a heel). No open-toed, excessive heel, thick rubber tread or dress shoes.
2. Wear comfortable pants - **No Shorts for Riders!**
3. Wear T-shirts or Long-sleeve shirts that are weather appropriate. No low-cut tops.
4. Helmets are provided for students, or the instructor can give a recommendation on where to purchase an approved riding helmet.
5. No Jewelry or other items that can get caught on rider or horse are allowed (e.g. long earrings, necklaces, etc.)
6. Sun hats are recommended for volunteers.
7. Sunblock should be used during Spring and Summer sessions.

8. Sweatshirt, coat and gloves should be considered for wear during Winter sessions
9. Please pull back long hair in to braids or low set ponytails. (High set ponytails or other hair accessories interfere with the riding helmet).

**Ride Your Horse! Policies and Procedures for Cancellations, Punctuation & Attendance**

Riding lessons can be canceled upon the day of class due to the possible following reasons:

**WEATHER: Rain, Mud, High Temperatures, Lighting, and or Wind.**

**OTHER: Unsound Horse or Shortage of volunteers.**

**In the event of any or all weather conditions or the listed above, Ride Your Horse! Holds the right to cancel riding lessons for the safety of riders, volunteers, horses, and staff.**

All riding students and volunteers are asked to call our "hotline" 30 minutes before scheduled lessons to ensure lessons are being held. A message will be posted if lessons are canceled. If no such message is posted please attend lessons as scheduled. This policy is in place due to Ride Your Horse! inability to predict nature's changing weather conditions and or the other conditions listed above.

**Punctuality and Attendance for Riding Lessons**

All volunteers/parents/students are required to contact Ride Your Horse! in the event of running late to a riding lesson.

**Punctuality**

Ride Your Horse! Ask that every riding student **arrive 10-15 minutes prior** to his or her scheduled riding lesson. This allows the student to have time needed for preparation before their scheduled riding lesson time.

In the event that the rider is 5-10 minutes late, the rider will be mounted and join the group lesson underway but lessons will end at their regular scheduled time. In the event that the rider is 15 minutes late or later, then that riding lesson will be canceled for that student. The parent/student is advised to contact the office for a possible make-up lesson. Please do not interfere with the lesson that is underway to discuss scheduling a make-up lesson.

**Attendance:**

All Volunteers/Parents/Students are asked to contact Ride Your Horse! 24 hours in advance up to 2 hours\* before their scheduled riding lesson time in the event that the rider/volunteer is unable to attend their lesson. Volunteers are expected to find a replacement for any planned absence (see Volunteer Handbook).

**If Riding Lessons Are Canceled by Ride Your Horse!**

A special make-up lesson schedule will be given out during that riding semester. ***\*\*Please note\*\* If you are not able to participate in the make-up riding lessons there will not be any other opportunities to make-up that canceled lesson. **No refunds or credits will be issued.*****

**If the student is unable to attend 3** of they're scheduled riding lesson without advance notice, then their riding lessons will be given up. ***\*\* No refunds or credits will be issued.***

The policies and procedures of Cancellations, Punctuality and Attendance are based upon the true fact that Ride Your Horse! Is completely reliant upon volunteers. Ride Your Horse! strongly takes volunteers' time into consideration and are truly grateful for their help. Without volunteers our riders cannot ride!!

**Ride Your Horse! Policy for the Discharge of Participants**

Riders at Ride Your Horse! may be asked to leave the program for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to:

1. The development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point the therapeutic riding is no longer beneficial or could be harmful to the participant or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.
2. Weight gain above the maximums stated previously.
3. Incomplete annual forms:
  - Application / Health History/Photo Release
  - Authorization for Emergency/ Medical Treatment
  - Consent for Release of Information
  - Participant's (Signed) Medical History and Physicians Statement
  - Policies, Procedures and Barn Rules Agreement
4. A display of fire-starting, threatening behavior, animal abuse, the abuse of children or adults, verbal abuse of volunteers or others, use of or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on

the property, or behavior that is disruptive for the normal functioning of the program on the part of the rider.

5. Frequent missed lessons, (more than 3) without advance notification.
6. Mainstreaming of an advanced independent rider whose riding has progressed beyond the ability of our program horses.

**Ride Your Horse! Policy for the Dismissal of Volunteers**

Volunteers at Ride Your Horse! may be asked to leave the program for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to:

1. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs on the grounds or at a Ride Your Horse! Events.
2. Breach of the confidentiality policy.
3. Verbal or physical abuse or sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior toward participants, other volunteers and or staff members.
4. Mistreatment of the horses or other animals at Ride Your Horse!
5. The expressing of vulgar language, inappropriate jokes, or disrespectful language.
6. Frequent missed work volunteer times, without prior notification and or explanation.
7. Smoking on stable grounds.
8. Persistent disruption of staff during lessons or special events.
9. Any behavior deemed inappropriate by property owner.

The riding instructors will handle all dismissals. The President will be informed of the situation and be part of the decision-making process whenever possible. A written reason for dismissal will be recorded and placed in the participant's file. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the individual, parents or guardians in private. Riders that are being asked for dismissal, parents or guardians of the rider may appeal the dismissal in writing, but the decision or the president will be final. Volunteers that are being asked for dismissal, parents or guardian's of the volunteer may appeal the dismissal in writing, but the decision or the President will be final.

**ATTENTION!! The following rules apply to everyone who visits, participates, volunteers, or works at Ride Your Horse! Therapeutic Riding Program. Please read these and become familiar with them pass this information on to anyone who may come with you to the barn.**

**Ride Your Horse! BARN RULES**

**At Ride Your Horse! safety is one of our top priorities! Please help us to enforce the rules!**

1. No abusive, threatening, or violent behavior will be tolerated on these premises.
2. Alcohol and illegal drug use is prohibited on grounds or during Ride Your Horse!-hosted events.
3. Absolutely NO smoking at the stable grounds.
4. Do not drink the water out of the hoses or faucets. Use the bottled water in the office or we recommend you bring your own.
5. No one is permitted at the stables without prior approval and or staff supervision.
6. All children must be supervised at all times.
7. No running or screaming is allowed in the stables or around the horses.
8. No one is allowed to handle, feed or pet horses unless supervised by a staff member or approved by a staff member.
9. No one may enter a stall or arena containing horses unless accompanied by a staff member or approved by a staff member.
10. No one may ride a horse unless supervised by a staff member. Everyone who rides must have a current and complete (annual) Application/Release packet on file.
11. All riders must have a completed, signed and dated the current packet on file. All riders must wear an ASTM-approved helmet while working with or mounted on horses, use safety stirrups and or wear hard-soled shoes with heels.
12. All volunteers must have a completed, signed and dated the current Volunteer packet on file in order to work at Ride Your Horse! TRP.
13. All volunteers must complete a volunteer training course.
14. All volunteers must sign in and out on the Volunteer Log each day they volunteer.
15. Instructors and trained volunteers will routinely check all tack, equine and human first aid and emergency equipment for safety.
16. Report all accidents, injuries or hazardous conditions to a staff member as soon as possible.

EACH PARTICIPANT AND PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN MUST SIGN BELOW AFTER READING THIS ENTIRE HANDBOOK.

I/WE, the undersigned, being of legal age, represent that I/WE have read and do understand the foregoing policies, procedures and Barn Rule handbook. I/WE understand that by signing this document I/WE are to follow all rules stated within this handbook. I am signing this while of sound mind and not suffering from shock, or under the influence of alcohol, drugs or intoxicants.

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SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

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DATE

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SIGNATURE OF PARENT, GUARDIAN AND/OR SPOUSE

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DATE