



PARTICIPANT POLICY HANDBOOK

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center

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High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center reserves the right to amend this document at its discretion.

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Program Information

SESSIONS

Riders' participation is one time per week, same day, and time. Sessions may consist of 10-week, 8-week, 6-week, or 4-week mini sessions. Lessons are not guaranteed to be private. If a private lesson is specifically requested, additional fees may apply. Lesson schedules are set prior to the start of each session. Requests to change lesson times cannot be accommodated within two weeks of the session start date.

LESSON STRUCTURE

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center's one-hour mounted lessons are divided into two (2) sections:

1. Groundwork (30 minutes): Grooming (brushing our equine partners) and tacking (putting on saddle and equipment) address the following developmental areas: Fine and gross motor skills, spatial awareness, vocabulary, motor planning, sequencing, memory, endurance, attention span, hand/eye coordination, bilateral involvement, balance, crossing midline, muscle strengthening, etc. The groundwork part of the lesson is vital for maximizing the therapeutic benefits of the program. Not only is this where the rider experiences responsibility and discipline, but also the satisfaction and companionship that comes with caring for another living being.
2. Mounted work (30 minutes): Exercises, riding skills and activities. These activities challenge the rider in many areas including balance, coordination, fine and gross motor skills, right & left handedness, motor planning, attention/focus, sequencing, communication, body awareness, muscle strengthening, flexibility, vestibular stimulation, range of motion, tone normalization, teamwork, socialization, and self-esteem. Distractions must be minimal during mounting to allow for the highest safety and therapeutic effectiveness for the rider.

Therapeutic Riding – Horseback riding lesson that is adapted to the needs of individuals with disabilities so they can experience the physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits of riding. The synchronized movement of horse and rider is used as a therapeutic tool to improve strength, balance, coordination, and self-confidence. Instructors, volunteers, and specifically trained horses and ponies work as a team to assist the rider to gain these benefits of horseback riding. The first half of the lesson is focused on grooming and tacking the horse. The second half of the lesson is spent riding. Riding lessons incorporate activities and games to reinforce riding skills. This program is offered in 10-week sessions.

Recreational Riding – Horseback riding lessons offered to anyone over the age of 4 years-old, who is interested in learning about how to care for and ride horses.

LESSON VARIATIONS

There are times when there will be changes from the regular routine. Time may be spent completely with groundwork one day, all riding with no groundwork another day, having a special activity/demonstration, or learning about horses in a different manner. Periodically we will take the riders out for a trail ride on the farm to expose them to a different perspective on riding. These alternate lessons are part of providing a comprehensive program for our riders so that they may experience all aspects of the horse. Weather related issues may require adaptations to the lesson plan (such as indoor or ground activities) but it is all educational.

Our objective is for each rider to become as independent as THEY can while reaching their goals. This may mean never coming off lead...and that is OK. Riding is a difficult sport to master, and we must consider the safety of all (rider, fellow riders, volunteers, instructor, and horse).

Center Policies

SMOKING

Smoking is NOT permitted in or around the barn areas.

PARKING

Please help us keep it clean! Escort riders to the barn for check in. Please lock your car – we cannot be held responsible for items left in the cars. The speed limit is 10 MPH.

PET POLICY

Dogs and other animals are not permitted with the exception of service animals. Please notify your instructor at the time of registration if you need to bring a service animal with you. For the safety of your pet, please do not bring them and leave them in your vehicle.

BATHROOMS

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center has a porta-john located outside the barn.

OFF LIMITS AREAS

Clients must remain within the designated barn areas unless given permission from the staff. Facility tours may be scheduled in advance.

Riding Apparel and Helmets

APPAREL

All riders **must** wear long pants for lessons to protect their legs and the tack. Riders are encouraged to wear hard soled, heeled shoes or boots, however tennis shoes are permitted. No open toe, sandals, or clog type shoes are permitted. Recommended attire includes supportive undergarments. We also recommend dressing in layers during cooler weather including gloves made for riding to help with grip.

HELMETS

All mounted participants must wear helmets that are ASTM/SEI approved for equestrian use. We will fit riders in one of our helmets or you may purchase your own after consulting with the instructor. High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center reserves the right to require helmets for specific equine activities.

Rider Participation

Recognizing that equine related activities hold inherent risks, all new and returning participants will be evaluated by our PATH Intl. certified instructors to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. Returning participants will be re-evaluated each year or as necessary for changes in medical, physical, cognitive, and behavioral status. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the adult participant, or of the rider's parent or guardian to keep High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center informed of any changes in the participant's medical, physical, mental, or behavioral status during the course of the riding season.

No participant will be allowed to ride until all fees are paid and all forms are completed and on file with High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center. High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center instructors will confirm class times with participants prior to each riding session. Please be aware that the lesson schedule accommodates only a limited number of make-up slots, and in cases where a participant must cancel a lesson, it may not be possible for High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center to reschedule. The need to miss a lesson should be reported to High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center as far in advance as possible. Please note participants who fail to report for a lesson without prior notification will lose all make-up privileges. High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center asks that every participant arrive 10-15 minutes prior to his or her scheduled riding lesson. This allows the student to have the needed time for preparation before their scheduled riding lesson time.

WEIGHT LIMIT POLICY

The first priority of High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center is to ensure the safety of our riders, volunteers, staff, and equine partners. We take many steps to assure our equine partners are fit and healthy so that they are able to provide the best experience for our participants. To achieve this, each horse has an assigned weight limit for mounted activities. This weight limit considers factors such as the horse's age, size, weight, conformation, and physical condition. We also must consider the participant's height, weight, behavior, balance, muscle tone, and side walker requirements in assigning horses to them. For example, a 150 lb. unbalanced rider who does not sit centered in the saddle is harder on the horse's back than a 170 lb. rider who sits balanced on the saddle. (Think of how a balanced load in a wheelbarrow is easier to push than an unbalanced one.) For these reasons, High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center participants will be weighed at the beginning of each session and evaluated for balance. Those whose weight exceeds the limits for our horses and those that we cannot accommodate safely may be recommended for unmounted activities. Depending on the participant, unmounted activities could include academic topics related to horses, leading, and ground activities.

Maximum upper weight limits for riders in the High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center programs are:
250 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 side walkers

Payment Policies and Attendance

FEES

Registration Fee

A nonrefundable registration fee of \$50 is required to enroll. This fee will be credited toward the second session if the participant signs up for a second session.

Therapeutic Riding Lessons are \$45/lesson, \$450 per 10-week session. Payment is due in full two weeks prior to starting the session. Past due payments will result in a \$10 per day late fee. Two weeks of non-payment will result in removal from the program. Payment arrangements may be made in advance with approval from the director. If a participant withdraws from a session within one week prior to the session start date, 50% of the session fee will be refunded. No refunds will be issued for withdrawals made after the session has begun. These refund policies apply regardless of whether the session fees are paid by the participant directly or by an outside party on their behalf.

CANCELLATIONS

Lesson cancellations are at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified as soon as possible in the event of a cancellation. If High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center must cancel classes a credit will be applied towards the next session. **Groups from agencies cannot substitute riders after the second class.**

Lessons may be cancelled by the facility due to but not limited to the following reasons:

Weather: Rain, mud, high/low temperatures, lightning, and/or wind.

Other: Unsound horse or shortage of volunteers.

In the event of any/all of the weather conditions or other events listed above, High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center holds the right to cancel riding lessons for the safety of riders, volunteers, horses and staff. We appreciate your understanding in these instances. If lessons are to be cancelled the day of classes, an instructor will notify you as soon as the information is available.

ABSENCES

Research has shown that regular, consistent therapy provides the best results. While occasional absences are unavoidable, missing classes means slower learning rates, impairs a participant's ability to progress, disrupts staff schedules, limits other participant's ability to arrange appointments and may impact volunteer coverage.

Please call the barn as soon as you know your rider will be absent. We must know at least 2 hours in advance to allow for any necessary lesson adjustments. A call is appreciated if you will be late for any reason so the instructor can still plan for that rider. Late arrivals of more than 10 minutes will not be allowed during group lessons to minimize group distractions. Private lesson arrivals will result in time being lost.

MAKE UP DAYS

There is one (1) make-up day per session, provided we receive advanced notification of your absence. Additional absences will not be made up. No-shows will not be allowed a make-up day. The make-up lesson is the last week of the session at your regular class time (unless told differently by the instructor). If you have not missed any classes or do not have a no-show and wish to participate in the extra week you may, by making prior arrangements with the instructor and paying an additional lesson fee. Payment is due the day of the class.

DENIAL OF SERVICES

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center 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 PATH Intl. operating center guidelines. Participants of High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center shall have no history of inappropriate behavior with fire, or any tendencies or history of abuse or violence directed toward other people or

animals.

Please note: Horseback riding is contraindicated for some conditions/individuals. High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center follows the PATH Intl. guidelines for precautions/contraindications for physical restrictions of riding. See the PATH guidelines on their website, www.pathintl.org, for detailed information. Riders at High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center must currently have some trunk control and be able to sit up with little or no assistance.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center is honored to host the Special Olympics Equestrian Team for Cherokee and Clay Counties. Special Olympics North Carolina provides funding for one 10-week session per athlete each year prior to the annual State Games. While this funded session allows athletes to participate and prepare, year-round riding is strongly recommended to build skills, ensure consistency, and remain competition-ready. Because there are a limited number of slots available for the State Games, riders who demonstrate a certain level of skill, commitment, and dedication throughout the year will be selected to represent Cherokee and Clay Counties at these events. Consistent training and ongoing commitment are essential for the safety of athletes, horses, and volunteers, and for the growth and success of the team.

DISMISSAL OF PARTICIPANTS

Riders at High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center may be asked to leave the program for various reasons, including, but not limited to:

1. The development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point that Equine Assisted Services is no longer beneficial, could be harmful to the participant, or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.
2. The rider's physical condition is not capable of maintaining human or animal safety. Accommodations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. Failure to complete and sign all required forms.
4. A display of fire-starting, threatening behavior, animal abuse, the abuse of children or adults, verbal abuse of volunteers or others, alcohol or drug use on the High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center grounds, or behavior that is disruptive for the normal functioning of the program.
5. Frequently missed lessons without advance notification.

A written reason for dismissal will be recorded in the participant's file. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the rider and/or the rider's parent or guardian in private. If a rider is dismissed from a lesson due to inappropriate behavior, fees will not be refunded for that lesson.

Release of Information

A completed and signed *Participant's Consent for Release of Information* form is required from the parent, caregiver or adult participant before High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center will release any information to an outside entity. Such information includes Medical Clearance/Health History, Therapist/Teacher Report, Progress Reports, etc.

Confidentiality Policy

High Lonesome Therapeutic Equestrian Center shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals (volunteers, participants, and staff) in its program. As a volunteer, participant, or staff member, you must maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information regardless of how it is obtained. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, all medical, social, referral, personal, and financial information regarding a person and his/her family. Breach of this confidentiality may result in either reprimand and/or loss of participation, of staff job and/or volunteer position.

PARTICIPANT'S POLICY HANDBOOK

I/We have read and understand this document and will abide by all the rules and regulations at all times. Parents/Guardians will ensure minors act in accordance with these policies. I/We understand that if these policies are not adhered to, I/We may be asked to leave immediately, per the instructor's discretion, and may be found to have grounds for dismissal. Any questions or concerns can be directed to the Executive Director during operating hours. (828) 835-3739

I have read and understand the above policies and procedures.

- I consent to physical restraint being used if necessary to ensure safety.

- I do not consent to physical restraint. I acknowledge and accept full responsibility for any injury, incident, or adverse consequence that may result from this decision. This includes, but is not limited to, situation where the participant engages in violent behavior, runs under or near horses, runs down the driveway, or puts themselves or others in danger. I understand that staff and volunteers will not intervene physically to stop the participant due to lack of consent. _____ (initials)

_____ Date _____
Participant

_____ Date _____ Parent/
Guardian