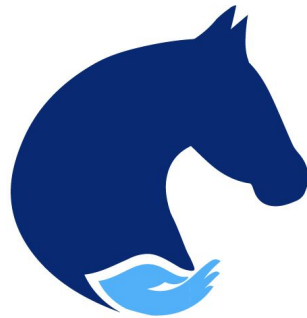


Participant Handbook



**STONEYBROOK
FOUNDATION**

THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

Revised October 2022

Table of Contents

Our Mission	3
Participant Information	4
<i>Benefits of Therapeutic Riding</i>	4
Eligibility	5
Limitations	5
Acceptance	6
Waiting List	6
Program Description	6
<i>Group v. Private Lessons</i>	6
<i>Family Support Lessons</i>	6
<i>Mounted Lessons</i>	6
<i>Unmounted Lessons</i>	7
Appropriate Attire	7
Conduct	7
Payment and Fees	7
Changing a Lesson	8
Time/Tardiness/Cancellations	
<i>Changing Your Lesson Time</i>	8
<i>Tardiness</i>	8
<i>Attendance, Cancellation & No Show</i>	8
<i>Policy</i>	
<i>Weather Cancellations</i>	8
Change of Health of Medication Status	9
Student Records	9
Grounds for Dismissal	10
Safety Procedures	10
Appendix A: Helmets, Clothing, & Footwear Policies	12

Our Mission

The mission of The Stoneybrook Foundation Therapeutic Riding Center is to improve the lives of children and adults with special challenges through a therapeutic partnership with horses.

Participant Information

Stoneybrook Foundation strives to offer programs that are safe and educational for our students. Our program is based on recommended practices from the Pennsylvania Council on Therapeutic Horsemanship (PACTH) and the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Int'l).

Benefits of Therapeutic Riding and Other Equine Activities

Physically

The horse's movement has a dynamic effect on the rider's body. This movement stimulates the rider's pelvis and trunk, and can help normalize muscle tone in this area. Horseback riding also improves the rider's posture, balance, coordination, and endurance.

Emotionally

The success of overcoming fear and anxiety and the ability to achieve riding and other related skills help participants realize their self-worth and increases their self-esteem. The relationships that develop between participants and the horses, staff, other riders and volunteers are an integral part of the positive emotional experience provided by a therapeutic riding program.

Cognitively

The horse becomes a strong motivator for participants. Riding and horsemanship lessons incorporate activities designed to help achieve specific goals for each participant; these can include following multi-step directions, staying on task, socialization, color and number recognition, and communication skills. Riding can help reinforce existing skills while helping gain new ones.

Socially

Therapeutic riding programs and their associated activities help participants learn respect, commitment, empathy, and trust. Participation is an excellent opportunity to interact with peers, staff, other riders and volunteers in a positive and enjoyable environment.

The horses, instructors, program staff, and volunteers comprise a unique team to provide an opportunity for our participants to experience personal growth in many ways. Horses have the ability to change lives, and our program seeks to share those benefits every day.

Eligibility

We serve individuals over the age of 4 years. An assessment and screening process conducted by staff determines eligibility for the program. The assessment process lets staff determine which program activities, if any, would be safe and appropriate for the individual and what resources are required (e.g., horse, riding equipment, volunteer and staff manpower).

New participants must complete a paperwork packet including a physician's medical form that is filled out by their physician yearly. All paperwork is required to be updated annually. This paperwork is provided at the rider's orientation, and must be completed before the rider can participate in Stoneybrook activities.

Once a participant is accepted into the program, the Instructor will establish individual long-term goals and short-term goals for that participant. Lesson plans help the instructor track a rider's progress, and goals are reevaluated annually. Participants ride either weekly or bi-weekly in lessons that average 45 minutes in length. Lesson activities may include developing basic riding skills, exercises, playing games on horseback and riding on trails. **Not all lessons are mounted lessons, since learning horsemanship skills involves more than mounted activities and riding.**

Limitations

A successful therapeutic riding program emphasizes safety and maximizes the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding. Due to the capacities of volunteer side-walkers, program horses, insurance requirements, and industry standards, our center is limited to accepting students with the following characteristics:

- Weigh less than 225 (for the well-being of our horses and the safety of staff and volunteers when assisting in mounts, dismounts and emergency procedures, staff reserves the right to recheck a student's weight between yearly paperwork completion dates)
- Can be effectively supported by side-walkers
- Do not exhibit conditions that contraindicate equine assisted activities
- Do not threaten the health or well-being of other participants, horses, staff or volunteers
- Have current paperwork, including signed and dated medical release

- Will benefit physically, emotionally, socially and/or cognitively from a therapeutic riding program

Acceptance

A potential student is ineligible for therapeutic riding if they have a condition that contraindicates horseback riding, according to the guidelines set by PATH, Intl., or if a student is unable to adhere to the policies as set forth in this Participant Handbook. Management, the rider's instructor, and their healthcare provider will make the final determination of acceptance and appropriateness for specific programs for any given client. Acceptance will be re-evaluated as needed.

Waiting List

Because we strive to accommodate as many participants as we can without decreasing the quality of service to our students, we have a waiting list for services. Some new students can be added into existing lessons if appropriately matched with other riders. Many factors contribute to appropriateness of pairing students together including: horse and staff availability, student cognitive and emotional levels, student age and physical ability. Although we try to move students off our waiting list as soon as possible, we cannot guarantee that our services will be available on a first come-first served basis.

Program Description

Group Lesson v. Private Lesson

All lessons at Stoneybrook should be considered group lessons. We can combine riders of similar skill levels into a group to encourage teamwork and socialization. These groups are arranged at the instructor's discretion.

Family Support Lessons

Family Support lessons are a fun way for family members to enjoy horses and riding with their Stoneybrook rider. We strongly encourage family support riders to participate in the same lesson as their rider, since these lessons are designed to be a way for family to share an interest! Family support lessons are \$45 per lesson.

Mounted Lessons

Each lesson incorporates the educational, physical, social, and recreational goals of each individual student. The lessons can last up to an hour, but may be shorter due to the

physical and cognitive demands of riding. Mounted lessons may include grooming, tacking, mounting, warm-up, an exercise, an activity or game, skill development, skill review, a closing activity and dismounting. Students may or may not be placed in group lessons based on the determination of the instructor.

Unmounted Lessons

At the instructor's discretion, sessions may occasionally be unmounted, focusing on ground activities with a horse. Activities may include grooming, exercising, feeding, bathing, leading, etc. Our program encourages learning complete horsemanship skills, which includes learning about horses and their care.

All lessons, both mounted and unmounted, must be conducted or directly supervised by instructors holding PATH, Int'l. certification. *At this time, we only offer a therapeutic horseback riding program.*

Appropriate Attire

Our participants are subject to equipment and apparel requirements for safety reasons. Please see Appendix A: Helmets, Clothing & Footwear Policies for the specific requirements. Students will not be permitted to enter the barn or participate in their lesson without appropriate attire.

Conduct

Thoughtful conduct and self-control affect the safety and enjoyment of all participants. All persons at Stoneybrook will be expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- Respect all persons—no abusive language or actions.
- Respect all animals.
- Respect all property.
- Refrain from loud, abrupt noises or actions.

Payment and Fees

Individual lesson cost is \$35 per lesson. Lessons must be paid at the time of service via check or credit card. **No cash is accepted.** Checks are made payable to *Stoneybrook Foundation Therapeutic Riding Center*. There will be a \$30 service charge for any returned checks. Lesson payment at the time of services reserves the student's time

slot. Any student with a balance owed on their account will not be eligible to participate in lessons until the balance is paid in full.

Changing a Lesson Time/Tardiness/Cancellations

Changing Your Lesson Time

We operate on a session scheduling system. Any student with recurring scheduling conflicts during a session should not register for that particular session, since excessive absenteeism is cause for dismissal from program activities.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive and be prepared for their lesson on time. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late for a lesson will not be able to participate in a mounted lesson. They may have a ground lesson, at the instructor's discretion, depending on availability of staff and volunteers. Late arrivals are disruptive to our schedule, and repeated late arrivals can be cause for dismissal from program activities.

Attendance, Cancellation & No Show Policy

If you need to cancel, please call the office at 724-613-3312 as soon as possible. We ask for a minimum 24-hour notice of cancellation, if possible, to give us time to notify volunteers and make changes to staff scheduling. Cancellations can be communicated by phone or email. Any student missing more than three lessons in a session, even if we are notified, will be dismissed from program activities.

Late notice cancellations (those without 24-hour notice) should only occur in the event of an emergency or serious illness. Any student with more than two late cancellations during a session will be dismissed from program activities. Any student with more than one no call/no show during a session will be dismissed from program activities. We do understand that unexpected medical conditions can affect our riders, and can discuss these circumstances with you on a case-by-case basis.

Weather Cancellations

We may close due to weather conditions. In the event of a closing, we will contact all students scheduled to have a lesson that day via phone and/or email. We also will alert our followers through our Facebook page. If you do not hear from us, you can assume that lessons will be held as scheduled.

We will observe a temperature cutoff for lessons of 25 degrees. We will use the temperature **inside our arena** to determine whether lessons will be held, since it is

often warmer in there than the outside temperature. We will also cancel for hazardous road/driveway conditions.

Since the weather in this area is typically worse than surrounding areas, we feel that we will cancel lessons more than is necessary for most people. Since we expect a lighter student roster for the winter session, we will make every attempt during the session to make up lessons we have canceled due to weather. If they cannot be made up, the remaining balance will be credited to your account.

Instructors have a list of unmounted activities to be used in place of mounted lessons when the temperature is above our cutoff, but still too cold for a particular student. These lessons will allow students to increase their horsemanship skills while not keeping them in the cold for too long.

If you still elect to cancel when Stoneybrook has decided to hold lessons, the regular cancelation policy will apply.

Change of Health or Medication Status

Students must immediately inform the office or their instructor, in writing, of any changes in health or medication. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in weight, increased/decreased medication dosages, revised diagnoses, medical interventions, surgeries, etc. Participation in our program is based on the medical information given to us in the Participation Packet, and changes to this information could make riding unsuitable. Failure to notify Stoneybrook of changes to the rider's health status could result in dismissal from program activities.

Student Records

Students are required to update their entire registration information and medical history forms annually. This paperwork is not only required to maintain PATH, Intl. accreditation and insurance eligibility, but also to assist instructors in creating appropriate lesson plans for students. Students are not permitted to ride without these annual renewals. The Stoneybrook Foundation notifies students prior to the expiration of these forms. It is the rider's responsibility to have these forms completed and returned to the office.

Grounds for Dismissal

Students/Families who cannot adhere to the policies set forth in this handbook or who no longer meet the eligibility requirements will be dismissed from all program activities.

Safety Procedures

Stoneybrook Foundation strives to provide the safest possible environment for students, volunteers, staff, and visitors. Horses, however docile, are capable of reacting in panic to unforeseeable stimuli. Working around and riding horses is a risky activity. The following rules must be followed at all times:

- Stoneybrook Foundation is a NO SMOKING facility.
- Students should have empty pockets while riding. This includes cell phones, keys, and toys.
- The consumption of alcohol prior to and/or while at Stoneybrook Foundation is prohibited, except for events approved by Stoneybrook Foundation
- The use of illegal substances prior to and/or while at Stoneybrook Foundation is strictly prohibited.
- Use a quiet voice while in the barn and working around horses.
- Refrain from offering food to other participants without permission as they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- Please obtain permission from a staff member prior to feeding any animal. Some of our herd are on special diets, and treats could be harmful to the diet. Additionally, hand feeding our horses is strictly prohibited. If you have permission to feed a treat, please place it in the horse's feed bucket or a feeding pan instead. Once a horse learns that people have treats on their person, they can be overly aggressive in finding more treats and may bite or knock an unsuspecting person over.
- No dogs or other pets are allowed on Stoneybrook property. Please leave your pets at home where they will be safe and comfortable.
- Do not enter the barn, horse stalls, paddocks, arena or pastures without staff permission.

- Do not mount unless under direction of an instructor.
- An adult must accompany underage students at all times on Stoneybrook property.
- Students must obey off-limit areas.
 - Students must be escorted by volunteers or staff members at all times while in the operating areas of Stoneybrook Therapeutic Riding Center.

Horse Treats/Feeding Policy

We know that our students love feeding their favorite horses, but some of our horses require special diets which is why we ask that if you decide to bring treats that you leave them with your instructor or barn staff so that staff can feed them later. Additionally, there is no unauthorized feeding of treats or food in the barn as feeding the horses by hand can lead to unintentional bites.

Appendix A: Helmets, Clothing & Footwear Policies

Helmets

All participants and personnel (staff and volunteers) of Stoneybrook are required to wear well-fitting protective helmets that are ASTM-SEI approved for horseback riding while taking part in any mounted activity.

Safety Stirrups

Stirrups with safety features that reduce the chance of foot entrapment are equipped on most of our saddles. Approved safety stirrups include “S” shaped, Peacock style, and Devonshire boots, and are required for students without a boot with a one inch heel.

Footwear

Riding boots are ideal for mounted activities. If riding boots cannot be worn, a sneaker or full cover protective shoe must be worn. Any student without riding boots will be required to use safety stirrups. **No sandals or open toed shoes are allowed in the barn.** Alternative footwear for students may be acceptable under specific circumstances. Any deviations from the footwear policy will be considered on an individual basis by program management.

Clothing & Accessories

Participants should dress suitable to the weather and season in clothing appropriate for equestrian activities. Shirts should not be low cut, and undergarments should not be seen. Wide strapped tank tops are acceptable as long as bra straps and the midriff area are completely covered at all times. Pants need to be cut high enough that when an individual bends over the pants stay in a respectable position. Regardless of temperatures, all mounted individuals will be required to have long pants to ride.

Clothing, hats or jewelry that restrict movement or vision are considered unsuitable. If you wear dangling jewelry, you will be asked to remove it, tuck it into a shirt, or tape it against your body. Students who are not dressed appropriately may not be permitted to fully participate in their lesson.