

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's goal is to provide safe and productive equine-assisted activities for all its participants. If Strides cannot accommodate the participant's needs or if the act of riding or the environment will aggravate his/her condition, equine-activities may not be appropriate.

As a PATH Center Member, Strides adheres to PATH guidelines and standards. In conjunction with PATH guidelines, we have established the following as eligibility requirements.

Age Policy

Minimum age for adaptive riding is 4 years old. With that said, the participant must be able to physically and safely perform what is required in an adaptive riding lesson. Minimum age for hippotherapy is 2 years old. For both programs, there is no maximum age.

Weight Policy

The first priority of Strides is to ensure the safety of our riders, volunteers, and horses. To maintain this safety goal, Strides horses are not allowed to carry more than 20% of their body weight including tack. Strides reserves the right to impose a weight limit if no horse is available to safely carry a participant weighing over 180 pounds. The weight limit may be adjusted based on the rider's physical abilities, the available horse, and the ability of staff and volunteers to safely support the participant. Participants within that limit will be evaluated by staff to determine if riding is a safe and appropriate activity. Areas evaluated may include, but are not exclusive to, ambulatory status, range of motion, and balance. The Executive Director has the discretion to make exceptions to this policy.

Precautions/Contraindications

If the movement associated with riding will cause a decrease in the participant's function, an increase in pain or generally aggravate the participant's medical condition, it is not the activity of choice. If the equine-assisted activities are detrimental to the participant or the horse, equine-activities may be contraindicated, according to PATH guidelines.

All participants are evaluated on an individual basis with regard to precautions and contraindications, as outlined by PATH guidelines. All team members (participant, parent/guardian, PATH Instructor, therapist, educator, physician, etc) must be comfortable with the final decision to approve participation.

Please be sure your physician is aware of the participant's particular diagnoses for precautions and contraindications. The following is a partial list of diagnoses of conditions, syndromes, disorders, and problems as assessed by PATH Int'l to be precautions and contraindications for riding activities. If you have any questions regarding this, please ask your physician:

- Degenerative Joint Conditions
- Heart/Cardiac Conditions
- Atlantoaxial Instability (AAI)
- Indwelling Catheters
- Skin Integrity
- Spinal Stenosis

Participants are assessed by Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's professional staff, contracted therapists, or recommendations by professionals in the health and educational fields and accepted with parental and / or caregiver consent.

Further Considerations

These may include the experience and expertise of the PATH instructor to address the needs of the participant, possessing a suitable horse for the participant, proper equipment, and availability of the appropriate number of volunteers for the participant. In addition, consideration may also be given to whether staff and volunteers are able to **safely manage the participant in any situation, including an emergency dismount.**

Participant Payment Policy

Invoices for the upcoming session will be sent by mail or e-mail to participants three weeks before the start of the session.

Payments should be made online at StridesTC.org; click on "TUITION".

Tuition is due in full one week before the start of the session or your spot is forfeited.

Unpaid tuition must be taken care of before being accepted back into the program. Once fees are paid, the participant will be added to the waiting list, if applicable.

Participants will receive credits only for lessons that are cancelled by Strides; these lessons must be completed during the session's corresponding "Make-Up Week". Note: participants will not receive credits for lessons missed due to illness, vacations, etc. of the participant or guardian even when advance notice is given to Strides.

Attendance Policy

If a participant is a "no show" three times within a calendar year, the participant will be dismissed from Strides program.

A minimum of two hours advance notice to Strides is required otherwise it will be considered a "no show".

In the event you are unable to attend your lesson last minute due to illness or family emergency, call Strides at (509) 492-8000, extension 1 to notify the instructor and volunteers.

If you are unsure about the weather, please check your voicemail, text messages, or email for a message from Strides and / or call Strides at (509) 492-8000, extension 1 to confirm lesson.

Participant Dismissal / Discharge

Discharge of participants would follow the PATH Accreditation Standards A-11. Participants or their families, who do not adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures, or fail to meet the guidelines for eligibility are subject to dismissal. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

Conduct endangering another participant, staff, volunteer, horse, themselves or other.

Repeated failure to follow established guidelines or policies.

A gain in weight above the maximum capacity of the program horses available at the time.

- Repeated absences without notification (also known as “no shows”).
- Failure to pay in accordance with Strides’s Payment Policy.
- Achieving a proficiency in riding such that the participant would be better served in a traditional riding program for non-disabled participants.
- Meeting therapy goals or hippotherapy is no longer beneficial to participant.
- A change in medical condition in which it is no longer safe or beneficial for a participant to continue.

Proper Attire

- Proper attire must be always worn. We recommend long pants, an appropriate top, and boots with at least a half inch heel, or alternate close-toed shoes.
- Students with medically approved footwear exemptions will be required to use stirrups with safety features, based on their individual needs.
- All students are required to wear an ASTM-SEI approved riding helmet which fits properly with an attached harness. A safety helmet will be provided by Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center unless the rider has his / her own approved safety helmet. ***No bicycle helmets will be allowed.*** A rider must wear a helmet whenever horses are present without a barrier.

Participant Goal Setting Policy

Each adaptive riding participant will have a set of goals, which will be documented and evaluated throughout the eight-week session. For a continuing participant, goals will be set before each session and progress towards those goals will be documented in a similar manner as the aforementioned process. Goals will be set and documented for every participant, using:

- Initial Assessment Form
- Weekly Progress Note
- End of Session Eval

Lesson Policy Standard

A typical group lesson is 40 minutes in length while a typical private lesson is 30 minutes. Both may consist of groundwork, mounting each participant, tack adjustments, exercises (while mounted), a new skill taught / reviewed, a game, cool down time, and the dismount.

Important areas used during lesson times

- Visitor / Family viewing area is located near the arena.
- All participants / visitors must remain in Visitor area until given permission by instructor or therapist.

Arrival to lesson for parents, family, and guests

- Please quietly wait in Visitor area or if a lesson is in progress or a participant is dismounting.
- All participants must remain in Visitor area until an instructor, therapist, or volunteer arrives to escort them to the mounting ramp or block.
- If you need to talk to the instructor or therapist about medical or physical problems which may have a safety implication for the current lesson, please do so before the lesson begins.

During lesson

- While a lesson is in progress, all visitors must quietly wait in the Visitor Area or their vehicle.

After lesson

- After the lesson the participant will be returned to their parent, guardian, or designated ride.

This policy is for the safety of all. During a scheduled lesson our instructors, therapists, and volunteers must maintain lesson focus at all times for the safety of our participants.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

If a participant will be absent for a lesson, it is the family's responsibility to notify the Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's office at **509-492-8000 extension 1** as soon as possible at least 24-hours before lesson was intended to begin. Late notifications negatively impact the volunteers and staff at Strides. Giving early notice helps keep the program running smoothly. If a participant fails to give notice of an absence, they will have to follow the Disciplinary Policy.

Please note, we will be ready to start weekly lessons at the agreed upon time. If participants arrive late, their lesson time will still end at the agreed upon time regardless of the circumstances. If they are more than 15 minutes late without notice, their lesson time will be forfeited for the day. There are **NO** make-up day's offered for missed lessons.

Please note: *If the participant cannot attend school or work because of an illness, they will not be allowed to attend their scheduled lesson either. Our hope is to limit the spread of contagious pathogens or infections. Please call us to cancel if this scenario occurs.*

Lesson Cancellations

The instructor / therapist is the only person with the authority to cancel any lesson. Absences for participant illness, vacation, etc. will not be made-up. With the amount of participant absences during the session, it is not within the capability of the center to make up all missed lessons.

Weather Cancellation Guidelines

Lessons are cancelled if unsafe weather conditions are present. These guidelines are:

- 1 - heat that exceeds 90 degrees
- 2 - sustained wind over 15mph or gusts over 20mph
- 3 - rainy conditions that make the arena footing unsafe.

Instructors / therapists assess conditions prior to lessons daily and try to inform participants in time to prevent needless travel. They may make a call to cancel classes only for the weather to change or improve unexpectedly. While that is regrettable, we will always err on the side caution.

Discharge of Participants

Participants may, during the course of equine-assisted activities, become no longer suitable for riding activities. The center's goal is to meet the individual needs of each participant; however, some circumstances may not allow for the center to safely meet the needs of a participant. The following are some reasons, which may warrant discharge from program activities:

1. If a participant's medical condition or behavior becomes a threat to safety of his / herself and / or others including the horses.
2. If a participant exceeds the 180 lb weight limit the riding portion of the program may be individually modified to that participant. For example, they may only be allowed to participate in the ground portion of the program.

The process in which a participant is discharged from program activities will be a team-based approach and decision, involving input from the Instructor, Therapist, Equine Director, and Executive Director. Prior to discharge (depending on the immediacy of the circumstance) the participant and / or legal guardian will be given adequate notice of possible need for discharge.

Efforts will be made to accommodate a participant's needs, if they can be met in an alternative way. For example, a participant might be better and more safely served in un-mounted activities.

If the reason for discharge involves behavior that compromises the safety of the lesson, the following disciplinary policy would be followed:

Disciplinary Policy

Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's disciplinary policy has been developed to ensure a safe and conducive environment for all involved in our programs. Our instructors / Executive Director reserve the right to discipline a participant, legal guardian, and / or volunteer.

1. **First offense** is a documented verbal warning. If this is a participant, he / she will be removed from the horse and will sit in a holding area until lessons end.
2. **Second offense** is a written warning. If it is a participant, he / she will be dismissed from the riding lesson for that day.

- 3. Third offense is the final warning.** If it is a participant, he / she will be removed from the horse and dropped from the Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's program.

Likewise, if the offender is a parent, guardian or visitor, they will follow the same disciplinary policy. (A documented verbal warning, a written warning, and a final warning.)

Examples: disruption to class, unacceptable or unsafe behaviors, disrespect to instructor / therapist / volunteers / other participants, failure to follow adhere to the Strides Policies.

Immediate Termination Policy

Any individual will be immediately removed from the Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's program for sexual comments or behavioral misconduct.

PARTICIPANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTRACT

Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center

Mail: 5426 N Rd 68 Suite D #204, Pasco, WA 99301

Physical: 180 Honeysuckle Road, Pasco, WA

STATE OF WASHINGTON

COUNTY OF FRANKLIN

Washington State Equine Liability Act

I am aware of the inherent risks of horseback riding. I further understand that I must be careful while on the property of Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center particularly while horses are being handled. Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center cannot and does not assume any liability for accidents, injury, or death to person or persons. I further have reviewed and understand the content of the Washington State Liability Law which is posted at the property entrance and riding arenas. Likewise, I accept full

responsibility for friends and visitors accompanying myself on Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center property.

Medical Update

I understand that it is my responsibility prior to entering the lesson area to inform the Instructor and / or therapist of any new medical or physical problems which may impact a rider's safety or ability to perform correctly during my scheduled lesson time. I further agree to handle all other questions or suggestions according to Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's Participant's Policy.

Confidentiality Policy

Participant information files will be held in confidentiality and only shared when necessary to ensure the safety of a participant in the lesson or during an official incident review.

Program Enrollment Policy

- All individuals present on the property must have a signed Liability Waiver on file.
- Participants must have the entire Participation Application completed and on file.
- Current tuition and all outstanding payments must be paid in full prior to a participant being scheduled for his / her evaluation and / or session.

The participant may not be allowed to participate in lessons until the aforementioned forms are completed in entirety. Official acceptance into the program is still pending upon a client successfully going through the initial on-site evaluation with an Instructor, and completion of the Participant Terms and Conditions Contract.

Update of Participant forms

Returning participants are to have the following forms **updated annually**:

1. Signed Release of Liability Form
2. Signed Participant Terms and Conditions Contract
3. Emergency Medical Treatment Release
4. Medical update with a healthcare provider's signature
5. Atlantoaxial Instability Verification (*if participant has Down Syndrome or Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis*)

In the case the above forms are not completed and returned at the requested annual update time, Strides Therapeutic Horsemanship Center's administration reserves the right to suspend program activities for that participant until forms are complete. Please also note that this may result in a participant losing their reserved slot for that session; the participant would be placed on a waiting list until a slot becomes available.

A returning participant will need to be reassessed by the instructor if more than 12 months has passed or his / her condition has changed.

SAFETY AND BARN RULES

1. Speed limit on Strides property is **5 MPH!**
2. Speed limit on Honeysuckle Road is **15 MPH**. Please be respectful of our neighbors.
3. Park vehicles in designated areas.
4. All participants are to be directly supervised at all times, including accompanying participants to the bathroom.
5. You are responsible for your guests / visitors' conduct and safety while on Strides property. Infractions will follow the Strides disciplinary policy.
6. Observing visitors must wait in Visitor area or their car unless otherwise directed by program staff.
7. **Please do not disturb the resident of the home that is located on the Strides property.**
8. All gates must be kept closed unless otherwise directed.
9. No entry into feed shed without volunteer / instructor present.
10. No entry into tack room or horse pens without volunteer / instructor present.
11. No entry into the gated arena without volunteer / instructor present.
12. No climbing, sitting, or standing on fences or gates.
13. No running at any time or anywhere on the property.
14. No yelling or raised voices; this may spook the horses and distract the volunteers and participant.
15. Smoking, e-cigarettes/vaping, alcohol, and drugs are strictly prohibited on any part of Strides property.
16. No personal dogs or other animals are allowed on Strides property. Service animals are the only exception, call Strides before you arrive.
17. All trash to be disposed of in trash barrels.
18. No horses to be handled in or out of the pens without program staff's permission and / or supervision.
19. Always respect others when speaking or socializing.