

# **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION HANDBOOK**







## **THE EQUESTRIAN THERAPY PROGRAM**

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in The Equestrian Therapy Program. We are fortunate to be able to provide this most worthwhile program to the Lima area. You are the backbone of our organization, without the help of a good volunteer group our program cannot exist. As the saying goes, "What we need, money can't buy"; we need you!

Although we require all volunteers to attend a training session before working, this booklet is to help outline what is expected of our volunteers. **Read it carefully**, as it is important for the safety of the students, as well as your own; then come join us and help to provide riding therapy for our students.

Please keep this booklet in a safe place and refer to it from time to time throughout the year. Thank you for caring!!

Sincerely,

The Equestrian Therapy Staff

If you need to cancel your scheduled volunteer time, please call the ETP office. If no one is there, an answering machine will turn on. The answering machine is checked regularly.

**Office (answering machine): 419-657-2700**

**Email:** [volunteers@etpfarm.org](mailto:volunteers@etpfarm.org)

**Volunteer Coordinator:** (419) 371-4881

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22532 Bowsher Road Cridersville, Ohio 45806 Phone: 419-657-2700 Farm: 419-657-6900

# **Introduction to Equine-Assisted Services**

## **Understanding Therapeutic Riding**

Therapeutic riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic riding provides benefits in the areas of therapy, education, sport and recreation and leisure.

## **Hippotherapy**

Hippotherapy is a direct medical treatment. It literally means “treatment with the help of the horse” from the Greek word hippos, meaning horse. Medical professionals, primarily physical and occupational therapists, use this medical treatment for their clients who have movement dysfunctions. With Hippotherapy, clients can benefit from improvement in dynamic posture and balance as well as improvement in sensory processing and functional mobility.

## **Therapeutic Ground Lessons**

Therapeutic Ground lessons use equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities. Therapeutic Ground provides benefits in the areas of mobility, social, education, sport, recreation and leisure while being unmounted.

## **Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy**

Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy is direct medical treatment. Mental Health Professional, Therapist, Counselor, Social Worker, use this medical Treatment for their Clients who have emotional and/or mental trauma and other medical diagnosis. These Clients will benefit not only from the medical professional being present during a session but also from the input that the horse and Equine Specialist gives during the therapy session.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

**Side walker-** Directly participates in riding session by assisting the rider. During the ride the sidewalker is responsible for walking/jogging beside the rider to insure safety. A minimum commitment of one hour per week is required for the nine-week term. Sidewalkers must attend a volunteer training session before participating in a riding session.

**Leader-**Directly participates in the riding session with the horse. During the ride the leader is responsible for leading the horse or walking/jogging beside the horse to insure safety. Leaders must attend a volunteer training session before leading in a riding session.

**Groomers-** Come to the farm, 1 -1 ½ hours ahead of the start of the first class weather morning, afternoon or evening to use the grooming tool kits to groom each horse that will be used in the class(es).

**Special Events-**Assist with organization fundraisers, horse shows, Ride-a-Thon and other events held throughout the year.

**Builders/Handy Persons-** Use your special skills to rebuild fences, paint, do yard work and miscellaneous maintenance necessary.

**Office-** Assist with filing, data entry, mailings, photocopying, phone calls, research and other miscellaneous tasks

**Volunteer Hours may vary depending on job and time of year**

## **When You Meet a Person with a Handicap**

- People with handicaps are people first. They are like everyone else, except for the special limitations of their disability.
- A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends, but, until your relationship is one of friendship, show friendly interest as a person only.
- Be yourself when you meet them.
- Talk about the same things as you would with anyone else.
- Help them only when they request it, or ask if they would like assistance. If a handicapped person falls, he might prefer to get up by himself, just as a blind person might prefer to get along without assistance.
- Be patient; allow the person to set his own pace in walking or talking.
- Don't be afraid to laugh with them.
- Don't stop and stare when you see people with handicaps. They deserve the same courtesy any person should receive.
- Don't ask embarrassing questions. If the handicapped person wants to tell you what his disability is, he will bring up the subject.
- Don't show pity or charity. Handicapped people want to be treated equal in all things. They want a chance to prove themselves.
- Don't separate handicapped people from their wheelchairs or crutches unless they ask you to remove them. They may want them close by.
- Don't make up your mind about handicapped people before you get to know them. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging their interests or ability.
- Enjoy yourself and your friendship with handicapped people. Their philosophy and good humor will give you inspiration.

## **Volunteer Requirements/Commitments**

- The minimum age for volunteers is 12 yrs. - Can start as Junior volunteers
- A training session is mandatory.
- Mandatory training for all Horse leaders on the leading method (Sandy Webster video) that is used in classes and other therapy sessions
- An Additional training session will be mandatory for those volunteers assisting with Mental health sessions
- Horse experience is desirable, but not essential, as long as the volunteer has no fear of horses and is willing to learn how to work around and with them.
- **Physical Fitness:** Leaders and sidewalkers must be able to walk at least one hour and jog occasionally, often on thick footing. Volunteers who cannot do this easily can be asked to help with other ETP needs.
- **Attire:** Volunteers should not wear open-toed shoes or sandals when working around horses. Volunteers should wear shoes or boots that offer foot protection. Dangling jewelry is unsafe to wear. Perfumes can attract bees or other insects and can cause allergic reactions to others. Chewing gum is not permitted during class.
- Volunteers must familiarize themselves with the location of the phone, fire extinguisher, first aid equipment (human and horse) and other safety signs around the arena.
- Every volunteer is covered by insurance while on the premises.
- **Volunteers must be willing to commit to a standing obligation.** Promptness, regularity and reliability are KEY! We will have a one-month trial period since therapeutic riding is not an activity in which everyone feels comfortable or functions adequately, even with the best of intentions.
- **The volunteer shall maintain in professional confidence any student and staff information, observation, or evaluation.**
- There are many students in the Equestrian Therapy Program who will need assistance in riding their horses. This is where the volunteer takes an active part in making the program work. Many riders need volunteers and there may be as many as three with each rider, especially in the beginning stages of riding.

**SAFETY IS OUR FIRST CONCERN**

## What a Volunteer Can Expect

### Before the lesson:

- Please call if you find you cannot come at your regular time. When possible, give at least twenty-four hour notice so we can find a replacement.
- If you need to cancel last minute, we understand. Please call the office phone and leave a message.
- For Side walkers: Please arrive at least fifteen minutes before class begins.
- Horse leaders: Please arrive 15-30 minutes before classes begins in case your help is needed in grooming your horse before tacking
- Groomers: Please arrive 1 – 1 ½ hours before the start of the first class

### When you arrive:

- Find the volunteer sheet and check the date by your name.
- Look at the student roster for the day's assignments. Know your student's and your horse's names.
- Horse leaders, make sure your horse is properly tacked and ready.
- Sidewalkers, make sure your rider has a properly fitted safety helmet and any other safety devices needed. All riders must wear helmets.

### During class:

- Please refrain from unnecessary conversation-it distracts the rider. Use non-verbal communication whenever possible during lesson times. Exception: TELL THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY OF ANY UNSAFE SITUATION.
- Pay attention to the instructor throughout the lesson.
- In case of a problem (stirrup or rider adjustment, sidewalkers changing sides, ect.), bring the horse into the center of the arena. Avoid stopping on the rail if possible, as this causes traffic jams.
- Notify the instructor of any unusual signs or problems, such as drowsiness, fatigue or emotional stress. Be discreet, however, when discussing a student in his/her presence.
- Be relaxed, confident and reassuring. Your rider will respond accordingly.
- Keep alert! You are responsible for your rider, as well as for the safety of the other riders in the class.
- Expect good behavior. Notify the instructor if you are having any problems. We do not tolerate hitting, biting, kicking, etc.

### In an emergency:

- Immediately halt all horses, with the leader taking the position at the front of the horse.
- Falls are rare, but can and do happen. In case of a fall, the instructor is trained to make the necessary decisions and will take care of the student.
- Try to keep your rider's attention away from the rider with the problem.
- **Be calm and alert.** Both riders and horses will respond to you quiet reassurance.
- Remember, sudden noises and movement can frighten both people and horse

### During the lesson:



- **Games** are important in almost every lesson. They may be simple, like Simon Says, or more complicated like Musical Stalls. The volunteer plays an important part in every game. The instructor will give the students the rules for the game to be played. Watch the rider to see if they understand the directions.
- **Enthusiasm:** It helps if the volunteer is excited too, but not so much that you play the game instead of the rider. Allow the rider to do as much as possible by himself. The real accomplishment comes when he/she does it himself and knows that he/she has.
- **Listen to the instructor.** Commands are given to everyone as a class, or to the rider as an individual, so it is necessary to listen closely to the instructor. Excessive talking is one of the worst distractions in the arena. Please keep conversations with the riders to what is necessary and save the conversations with other volunteers until after class. This is difficult at times, but with up to twenty people in the arena at a time, the confusion and noise can get out of hand.
- **Rider control:** It is difficult not to do things for the riders, such as guiding, stopping, ect., but the only way they will learn is to do it themselves, even though it may take twice as long for them to complete a task that you would do without thinking. Use common sense. If a rider has a real problem or becomes too frustrated, of course you can assist. But the more we let them do on their own, the more they will learn and feel a true sense of accomplishment. Give lots of encouragement and praise.

### **Additional Information**

>The rider does not assist with taking the horse to or from pasture areas for any reason. Nor can the rider even walk part way out there with you for any reason. ETP Staff member, horse leaders, other designated personal are only ones allowed to take horses to and from their pasture areas

>Riders may assist with taking their horse to or from the stall with a staff member or horse leader present with them

>Riders may not enter the arena without the Instructor present in the area, in case of an emergency were to happen

## Basic Safety Rules Around Horses

- Always speak to the horse as you approach or before touching him.
- Always approach the horse at the shoulder area, never from the rear, as he cannot see you.
- Avoid ducking under or stepping over cross ties. Either walk in front of the horse or right behind him. Stay close to him as you go. If you keep one hand on him and talk to him, he will know where you are.
- Let the horse know what you are going to do. Example: Run your hand down his leg before you pick up his foot.
- It is wise to wear boots or sturdy shoes in case a horse should accidentally step on your foot. Never go barefoot around a horse.
- **Never** tie a horse by the reins or bit.
- **Never** leave the reins or lead hanging on the ground for the horse to step on.
- Secure the reins to the safety strap or handhold on the saddle whenever the horse is without a rider, or tie them to the handhold with the lead.
- **Never** wrap the lead rope or the reins around your hand, wrist or any part of your body.
- **Always** tie with a quick release knot.
- **Never** tie a horse to a moveable object such as a barn door, a trailer door, the arena fence, a bench or any object that a 1000 pound horse can move when frightened.
- If a horse becomes frightened or nervous, halt and talk to him reassuringly, stroking him on the neck or shoulder.
- **Never** tease a horse. Your safety may be threatened.
- When grooming, always maintain a position that allows you to move quickly should the horse move suddenly.
- Be sure stall doors are all the way open with the door latch back and down when leading horses in and out. They could hurt a hip or shoulder if the latch is left partly out.
- **Always** lead the way through openings. Never let the horse start ahead of you, as he could kick you or ram you into the door or gate post.
- Open gates wide and be sure the gate does not squeeze or bump the horse as he goes through. He could run over you if he thinks the gate will hurt him.
- If another horse gets loose, or loses its rider, halt your horse, remain calm and wait for instructions from the instructor. Do not let go of your horse.
- Pay attention to footing-the barn floor can become slick if it's wet or snowy, especially if your horse has shoes on.
- If in doubt about a procedure, ask your instructor.

The following will explain in more detail what is expected of you as a leader or a sidewalker. Please read through all the directions, as there are points included which apply to all the volunteers.

# The Leader

**The main responsibility of the leader is the horse.**

## **In the mounting area:**

- If you are leading a rider who has to be mounted in the mounting area, pay close attention to the instructor because she will tell you where to position the horse. You will want to place the horse as close as possible to the side of the lift/ramp on which the rider will be mounting.
- Your responsibility is to keep the horse as quiet and still as possible. Stand in front (or just to the side) of the horse's head with your hands on the lead or reins. You may need to lower the horse's head to make mounting easier for a rider whose leg must be passed over the neck or withers of the horse.
- After the rider is mounted, **and before the stirrups are adjusted**, you will be asked to move the horse forward and out of the mounting area. Stop when told by the instructor. After the stirrups and girth are adjusted, the instructor will have you walk on

## **Mounting in the arena:**

- If your rider will be mounting in the arena, the instructor will give you directions. The rider may lead his horse to the arena with your assistance, or you may be asked to lead the horse to a position in the arena and your student will come to you.
- **Do not attempt to help the student mount.** The instructor will do all the mounting unless you and the rider are told otherwise. During this type of mounting, once again stand with your position in front of the horse. If your rider is standing with you waiting to be mounted, please see that the rider stand quietly beside you.

## **In the arena:**

- Once you have entered the arena with your mounted rider, the instructor will give you directions. Be sure you are a safe distance from the horse in front of or beside you. As the class begins, all instructions will be given to the rider by name, so be sure you know your rider's name. Try to discourage casual conversation and direct the attention of your rider to the instructor. **Not to let go of your horse!!** A loose horse can cause all kinds of problems. The main goal is to understand the situation and to look at each situation individually

## **If a rider falls:**

- Falls are rare, but can and do happen. If your rider falls, your only concern is the horse you are leading. The instructor will take care of the student.
- If another rider falls and his horse gets loose, **stop immediately** in front of your horse and hold him as you would when in the ramp. **Never let go of your horse!** A loose horse can cause untold trouble.
- Do not panic if there is a fall. The riders fall frequently in all types of situations. They fall on sidewalks, off swings, etc. The fall off a horse is really not any worse than they could get at home. **Be calm.** The instructor is trained to handle any situation-that is her job; so keep your mount under control and allow the instructor to do her job.

## **How to lead a horse:**

- The proper position for the leader is to walk just back of the horse's head in the neck/shoulder area. Do not get in front or too far behind. When there are two sidewalkers present, the leader will walk more forward toward the horse's head so there is enough room for the sidewalker to walk comfortably behind him. When there is only one sidewalker, the leader may walk on the opposite side of the horse.
- It is important to keep two horse lengths between riders.
- **The lead line should never be used to pull the horse forward.** For all practical purposes, the horse should not know you have a lead on him-only that you are walking beside him. Care must be taken to ensure the horse's head is not up high in the air or too low to the ground, as this may throw the rider off balance.
- Hold the lead line in the hand closest to the horse, approximately six to eight inches away from the ring or bucket. Hold the extra line in the other hand; **never wrap it around your hand.** Just loop and hold it lightly. We are using the Sandy Webster Leading method in all classes and therapies sessions.
- Keep your hand away from the horse's mouth. Our horses are patient, kind and gentle, however, when annoyed or out of sorts, they can and may bite. If nipping should occur when a rider is mounted, usually a firm snap on the lead and a sharp "no" will eliminate the problem. Inform the instructor.
- In order for the rider to have complete freedom to use the reins correctly, care should be taken to ensure that the lead line is not run over the reins. The lead line must be hanging between the reins and not over the top of them.
- Remember, just as the size of the mount varies, so do their steps. With some horses, you will be able to walk faster than others. Adjust your step to that of the horse so you are not pulling him forward or holding him back, but do try to **encourage the horse to have an easy, forward-moving, steady walk.**
- If you are leading a lazy horse, the leader should not try to take the place of the rider either by pulling the horse forward or turning or stopping the horse. **Encourage the rider to do as much as possible alone.** When a rider has been asked to perform a task, allow him a reasonable length of time to accomplish it on his own before providing assistance.
- **Look up and ahead to where you are going.** Many leaders forget that they have sidewalkers and get too close to the arena walls, poles, etc. Avoid sharp turns and cutting corners. These are hard on the riders and the sidewalkers.
- **Give yourself room from the horse in front of or beside you.** Though none of our horses are known kickers, all horses will kick if pressured by a mount being too close to their hind legs. If your rider cannot maintain a safe distance, then you may always help him/her do so. Many of our riders have no space orientation, and consequently, do not realize when they are too close to the horse in front of him. Use common sense; if you see your rider getting into trouble and unable to follow the instructor's directions, certainly you can assist.
- **Be aware** of your horse (mood, speed and walk), your student and your position in the arena at all times.

**At the Halt:**

- One of the most important tasks the leader has, particularly with a handicapped rider, is at the halt. Whenever the horse and rider are stopped, stand in front of or just to the side of your horse's head holding the lead or reins. Allow the horse some freedom to move his head, but keep him quiet and calm by petting him or softly speaking to him or both.

#### **At the Trot:**

- Often during a lesson, the rider will be asked to trot or jog. The instructor will come over, if necessary, to give instructions to the rider and you. **Make sure the rider and sidewalker are ready before you trot.**
- Start your gait a little faster and say "Trot!" Most of our horses are good on voice command, though you can always run into one that is lazy that day and just does not want to do more than walk. Do not pull on the lead. This will only make the horse mad and he will fight it.
- When the command is given to walk or stop, do so in a steady, straight line so as not to unseat the rider.

#### **Dismounting:**

- Unless otherwise specified, the instructor will dismount the student. You will receive specific instructions as to whether to bring your rider to the mounting area or remain in the arena. Once again, keep your horse quiet by standing in front and keeping him still while dismounting is taking place. The instructor will tell you where to put your horse and his tack after that.

## The Sidewalker

### The main responsibility of the sidewalker is the rider.

- The job of the sidewalker is to help maintain the balance of the rider when he cannot do so himself, to clarify instructions and directions when needed and to provide reassurance and encouragement to the rider.

NEVER LEAVE YOUR RIDER UNLESS SOMEONE IS THERE TO TAKE YOUR PLACE!

- Some students, especially in the beginning stages, have a definite balance problem, off the horse as well as on. Depending upon this balance, there will either be one or two sidewalkers assigned to the rider. For example, some riders will need to be helped by the placement of your forearm over their thigh; some riders will not have to be held at all, or will only need the reassurance of your hand on their leg. The instructor will inform you as to the requirements of your rider. You may be asked to spot or assist with mounting your rider.

### In the arena:

- **Be alert to your rider at all times!** – especially the ones with balance problems. Never become so relaxed that you are not totally aware of the rider, the horse, the leader, the instructor and the other activities around you. Be careful not to walk with your eyes to the ground, since you will not be able to observe the rider for any sudden loss of balance or be able to assist the rider if the horse should stumble or shy.
- If a rider starts to slip, do not just grab the rider; gently push him back into the proper position. Sidewalkers are very important, as they are constantly aware of the rider and what he/she is doing. The safety of the rider depends on you.
- Sidewalkers should position themselves at the rider's knee, facing forward. Stay close to the rider's knee at all times so the horse knows where you are. In this position, you can easily and quickly place your forearm across the rider's upper leg to aid their balance.
- Since the sidewalker is always close to the rider, you will find they will want to talk to you a great deal. Do not ignore direct questions, but try and get your rider to pay attention to the instructor. Many handicapped riders have difficulty focusing on instructions, so all talking should be kept to a minimum.
- Sidewalkers should be listening to the instructor's directions so you can be ready to reinforce the directions, assist the rider in carrying out the instructions or direct the rider's attention to the task at hand.
- A sidewalker may need to assist the rider to hold or position the reins, hold onto the handhold or use the leg aids.
- Watch your rider carefully during exercises and assist them as needed.

### At the trot:

- Before trotting, make sure the rider is positioned squarely in the saddle and that they are holding the handhold.

### Ask the leader to stop the horse if:

- The rider is off balance and cannot regain his balance while the horse is moving
- The saddle pad has slipped or the girth is loose.
- The stirrups need adjusting.
- The rider's helmet needs adjusting.
- The rider is fatigued, in pain or needs to stop for any other reason.
- You need to change sides or you are having difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort and safety. Avoid twisting yourself, or trying to walk in an awkward position. We do not want you going home with sore muscles.

Unless it is an emergency, the leader will take the horse to the center of the arena so as not to block other riders while tack is adjusted or the rider is properly settled.

**Dismounting:**

- The instructor will inform the rider and sidewalker of the correct procedure during the dismount. When dismounted, many riders are able to run up the stirrups or help put the horse away.
- When finished with the lesson, the sidewalker helps the rider put his helmet away and accompanies the rider back to the bleacher area.

**Before you leave:**

- Please share any ideas, problems, observation or suggestions you have with the instructor. Our volunteers are a vital part of the team and we do want to hear from you.

# **FASSETT FARM/EQUESTRIAN THERAPY PROGRAM EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

## **FIRE:**

- 1. CALL 911. If you cannot safely reach a phone, do not delay evacuation.**
- 2. Leave the building at the nearest exit.**
- 3. Go to the central meeting place assigned:  
    A. Green Space**
- 4. Wait for further instructions from emergency personnel.**

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE ANIMALS FROM BUILDINGS!!**

## **SEVERE WEATHER:**

- 1. Go to the designated Safe Shelter area – Feed room in new building.**
- 2. Close doors. Cover your head.**
- 3. Tune in to local radio and television stations for emergency information.**

**Wait for further instructions from the ETP Staff person(s) in charge.**



1. Riders must wear a helmet when mounted and working with a horse.
2. No chewing gum while mounted.
3. Everyone is to walk quietly through the barn, without running.
4. Always walk around the head of the horse, not behind (when ever possible)
5. Respect all persons, animals and property.
6. Students (adults and youths) must always stay with an instructor, volunteer, or teacher when going beyond waiting area.
7. Treats can only be fed to the horses with instructor permission and with the help of a volunteer. No feeding from your hand only use **Treat Bowls**.
8. Students must wear long trousers that fit neatly and sturdy closed-toed shoes.
9. Indoor voices and appropriate language must be used at all times.
10. Pet the horses on the neck or shoulder – not the face. Approach them in a slow quite manner.
11. Listen to the instructor and follow directions carefully.
12. **Staff, volunteers, and participants will silence their cell phones during equine assisted activities and/or while handling equines. Under no circumstances will staff, volunteers, or participants answer their cell phones during equine assisted activities or while handling equines. Cell phones should be left outside the arena if at all possible.**



## THE EQUESTRIAN THERAPY PROGRAM

### CODE OF CONDUCT AND PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

1. In order to protect Equestrian Therapy Program staff, volunteers and program participants – at no time during an ETP event may ETP staff or volunteers be alone with a single child where staff or the volunteer cannot be observed by others.
2. Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Restroom supervision: staff and volunteers will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals do not occupy the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities. A staff member or a volunteer will stand in the doorway while a child uses the restroom, unless they are taken to the restroom by a parent or guardian.
4. Staff and volunteers should conduct or supervise private activities in pairs. When this is not feasible, staff or volunteers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
5. Staff and volunteers should not abuse children, including:
  - Physical abuse – striking, spanking, shaking, slapping
  - Verbal abuse – humiliating, degrading, threatening
  - Mental abuse – shaming, withholding love, cruelty
  - Neglect – withholding food, water, basic care, etc.
  - Sexual abuse – inappropriate touching or verbal exchangesAny type of abuse will not be tolerated, and may be cause for immediate dismissal.
6. Staff and volunteers must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison and criticism. Staff will have age-appropriate expectations, and set up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline. Physical restraint is used only in pre-determined situations (necessary to protect the child or other children from harm), is only administered in a prescribed manner, and must be documented in writing.
7. Staff and volunteers will conduct a visual health check of each child, each day , as they enter the program, noting any fever, bumps, bruises, burns, etc. Questions or comments will be addressed to the parent or child in a non-threatening way. Any questionable marks or responses will be documented.
8. Staff and volunteers respond to children with respect and consideration, and treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion or culture.
9. Staff and volunteers will respect children’s rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no.
10. Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.

11. While the ETP does not discriminate against an individual's lifestyle, it does require that in the performance of their job as staff or volunteer you will abide by the standards of conduct set forth by the Equestrian Therapy Program.
12. Staff and volunteers must appear clean, neat and follow the dress code policy.
13. Staff and volunteer identification badges must be worn during program operation.
14. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
15. Smoking, vaping or the use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
16. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
17. Staff and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted.
18. Staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
19. Staff and volunteers may not be alone with children they meet in ETP events outside of the Equestrian Therapy Program. This includes babysitting, sleepovers and inviting children to their home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact, and are subject to administrator approval.
20. Staff and volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles unless participating in an ETP special event.
21. Staff and volunteers may not date program participants under the age of 18 years old.
22. Under no circumstances should staff and volunteers release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with the ETP).
23. Staff and volunteers are required to read and sign all policies related to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and to attend training on the subject as instructed by a supervisor.
24. Every staff member or volunteer has an absolute duty to report any suspicion of child abuse, molestation or sexual misconduct to the proper authorities. The child protective agency will determine the accuracy of the report.
25. Volunteers or staff members may receive information regarding the participants. The staff and volunteers will treat any information regarding the participant as confidential.
26. Staff and volunteers will silence their cell phones during equine assisted activities and/or while handling equines. Under no circumstances will staff or volunteers answer their cell phones during equine assisted activities.

**I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in termination.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date