

Equest Schooler Program

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The purpose of the Schooling Program at Equest is to contribute to the horses' well being by riding and schooling them in a manner that keeps them fit, agile, balanced, supple, relaxed and able to perform their job to the best of their ability. Research has proven when therapy horses are schooled on a regular basis they stay sounder and are more comfortable in therapy settings than horses that are not.

In addition, it is Equest's intent for the Schooling Program to be an enjoyable, educational, and social program for all the humans involved.

Schooler Criteria

1. Minimum age of rider: 16 years.
2. Schoolers must be able to ride with a secure seat, correct alignment, balanced weight distribution, strong and effective aids, and possess a thorough understanding of equine psychology and behavior. In addition, Schoolers need to have the ability to communicate with the horse in a beneficial manner both mounted and unmounted.
3. Skills that are required of the Schoolers include: riding the horse on the bit, working knowledge of diagonals and leads, ability to bend and supple the horse, lateral movements such as leg yielding, side passing, turn on the forehand and haunches, simple lead changes, warm up and cool down procedures and the ability to identify unsoundnesses, stiffness, gait and behavioral problems.
4. Schoolers will test and school in their discipline (i.e., English, Western) of choice. To ride more than one discipline, Schoolers must test in those disciplines.
5. Periodically throughout the year, the Schooler Team would like to offer clinics (clinician recommendations are more than welcome from all Schoolers!). These clinics will be announced as they are scheduled, and a Team meeting will be held to determine the amount of money needed to be raised, and what type of fundraiser will be held. Anyone participating in the fundraiser is welcome to participate in the clinic.

Schooler Procedures

1. Upon passing the schooling test, Schoolers will be given a list of horses they are eligible to ride. These horses will be listed in priority order. If the Schooler's first horse is being used or is on the off list, they will continue down their list until they find one that is available. In the Fall and Spring Sessions, a horse usage chart will be emailed out to all Schoolers so they can see when their assigned horses are available. If a Schooler feels they are uncomfortable, or are incompatible with any assigned horse, then they may request re-assignment.
2. There will be a horse log book in the tack room. Each horse has a sheet with room to write a brief summary of each schooling session, as well as listing the ideal frequency of schooling rides for each horse per week. The front of this book will have a quick reference sheet to see how many rides each horse has had in a given week, and also a place to check which horses are off.

3. Schooling may be done during the following times:

➤ **During the Session:**

Tuesday through Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Friday 7:00 a.m – 5:30 p.m.
Saturday through Monday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

➤ **Non-session times:**

Monday through Sunday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m

Riding times are pending the use of a free arena, weather permitting, and event scheduling.

Some instructors would like to have Schoolers as demo riders in their classes. This class list will be distributed to Schoolers at the beginning of each session.

Schoolers are welcome in Volunteer Riding Classes on a space-available basis by permission of the Instructor.

Schooler Rules

1. There must be an Equest employee on duty at any time a Schooler is on the premises of Equest.
2. All riders must wear an ASTM/SEI approved helmet when mounted at all times!
3. When riding in the arenas all gates must be closed.
4. Tack must be clean following use and put away properly.
5. Horse injuries, unsoundness, and unusual behavior must be reported to a staff member.
6. Horses must be warmed up thoroughly and cooled down adequately and in a manner that is conducive to the horse's well being.
7. All accidents (falls, bites, kicks, etc.) must be reported and an occurrence form completed.
8. To ride in the pasture, a staff member must grant permission and Schoolers under 18 years must be accompanied by an adult. *No horses may be turned out in pasture when Schoolers are riding in pasture. Check with barn staff to see which pastures are open.*
9. Jumping the horses is by permission of an instructor only, and only with an instructor present unless otherwise waived. If Schoolers set jumps in any arena, they must remove the jumps when finished riding. Exception: Jumps set Wednesday afternoon through Saturday morning may be left in the outdoor arena.
11. Schoolers must chart the horses on the schooling chart after each ride. Remember to sign in your Volunteer hours.

Schooler Inactive Policy

People's situations change and it is common for an active Schooler to become inactive. If a Schooler has not ridden for one year, they will automatically be transferred to the "inactive" list. To re-instate "current" status the Schooler must ride under observation of an instructor to update their horse assignment list.

Schooler Dismissal Policy

Although Equest will make every effort to meet Schooler's needs, sometimes it may be necessary to remove a person from Schooler status. Grounds for dismissal may be:

1. Riding that is deemed not beneficial to the horses.
2. Abusive or neglectful treatment of the horses.
3. Non-compliance with the Equest guidelines, rules or policies.
4. Behaviors that are not in the best interest of Equest.