

# Fair Hill Therapeutic Riding Center

## Policies and Procedures for 2023 - Participant Manual

### Description of Therapeutic Riding Program

The Therapeutic Riding program is designed to teach individuals with physical, cognitive, social, or emotional challenges the skills necessary to ride a horse, as well as the skills necessary to appropriately groom and tack a horse in preparation for riding. Skills taught will vary depending on the rider. Therapeutic Riding lessons are taught by certified therapeutic riding instructors. Using a team approach, cognitive, physical, social, and/or behavioral needs are identified. Then goals are determined and a safe and effective course of lessons is planned. Lessons include riding skills, as are practiced today through PATH industry standards, leading to independent riding.

### Statement of Participant Eligibility or Dismissal

Fair Hill Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. offers services to individuals with special needs. Eligibility for participation in FHTRC's programs is based solely upon an individual's ability to participate meaningfully and safely, provided the necessary resources are available including: an instructor, horse, volunteers and class availability which meets individual's needs.

Due to the nature of therapeutic riding and other equine related activities, there are individuals for whom FHTRC's programs are deemed inappropriate during the evaluation process and are not accepted for enrollment or not eligible to continue in FHTRC's programs. This determination is made on the basis of physical, behavioral and other limitations including industry standards and safety guidelines.

Individuals accepted into FHTRC's programs are required to take part in periodic progress reviews and follow FHTRC's rules and procedures. During these reviews, or as a result of unusual occurrences during a program session, the FHTRC professional staff may find that continuance in the program for a given individual is inappropriate or contraindicated. For this reason, FHTRC reserved the right to discontinue the participation of an individual in its programs when it is deemed that discontinuance is in the best interest of FHTRC and/or the individual concerned.

**Fair Hill Therapeutic Riding Center reserves the right to decide we are unable to serve an applicant due to unavailable resource(s) and/or safety concerns including industry guidelines set by PATH International relating to contraindications for participation.**

### Participant Criteria

#### Therapeutic Riding:

- Physically able to sit symmetrically with torso upright and legs astride the horse during dynamic movement
- Physically able to maintain head and neck position independently in proper alignment with dynamic movement
- Weight less than 200 pounds due to the current limits of the current herd
- Able to tolerate a riding safety helmet
- Ability to accommodate the movement of the horse without pain
- Adequate range of motion in hip(s) to sit astride
- Does not exhibit physical or behavioral conditions that are contraindicated by PATH Intl. (see medical form)
- Have current signed and dated paperwork – including all forms required by FHTRC such as Medical Release form, liability form, Emergency Contacts and Authorization for Medical Treatment forms
- Benefit physically, emotionally, socially and/or cognitively from services provided at FHTRC.
- Complete an intake assessment where trained staff evaluate eligibility
- Safety awareness around animals
- Ability to express pain or discomfort
- Behave in a manner that is safe for self, horses and others
- Recommended minimum age limit for Therapeutic Riding is four years old with no maximum age limit

## Annual Update of Paperwork

It is a requirement of both industry standards and FHTRC that ALL participants update their information and submit new forms yearly. This standard is regardless of how often an individual has participated at FHTRC during the previous year. **It is the participant's responsibility to be sure paperwork is current.** Failure to comply will result in a temporary suspension from the program until paperwork is made current. All necessary paperwork is available on our website, or you may contact us to obtain the necessary forms.

## FHTRC Behavior Policy

**FHTRC is committed to fostering an environment in which our riders and families can expect a positive and safe experience. To achieve this, we have outlined expectations for behavior and conduct. We acknowledge and understand the special needs of our riders may result in unintentional behaviors. These parameters apply specifically to intentional behavior. Repetitive violation of this policy by a family member, participant, or volunteer may result in removal from our program.**

The following are strictly prohibited:

- No swearing or foul language
- No firearms are permitted on the grounds
- No physical violence – this may include but is not limited to: kicking, punching, slapping, hitting, kicking, biting, pushing or shoving of any person or horse
- No verbally abusive conversation in any form will be tolerated. This includes toward riders, family members and/or any FHTRC staff member

## FHTRC Dress Code & Policy

**The clothing we wear while working with horses serves both functional and protective purposes. To achieve this, we have outlined expectations for proper dress. Failure to abide by the dress code and policy may result in a rider not being able to participate in their session and/or the request to leave the premises.**

Please abide by the following:

- All persons on the premises must wear appropriate **footwear** in any area that they may come into contact with horses. Ideally, shoes should be in sound shape, so as to offer protection from injury.
  - Open toed shoes, sandals, and bare feet are prohibited
  - Hard-soled shoes or boots with heels are ideal for riding, but sneakers are acceptable. (see sec. on use of stirrups)
- Long pants, such as jeans or leggings are required for all participants and volunteers and recommended for family members, caregivers or others who are observing. Nylon pants (such as warm-up pants or ski pants) are not permitted because they are too slippery against the saddle or pad.
  - Participants may also choose to wear riding jodhpurs or breeches.
- All participants and volunteers must wear **ASTM-SEI approved helmets** while grooming, mounting, dismounting and riding the horses. Riders are encouraged to purchase their own helmet, although shared helmets are available.
- No sexually explicit or revealing clothing may be worn, shirts should cover the midriff.
- No clothing items worn on premises may display:
  - Foul language
  - Violent or sexually explicit behavior
  - Drugs or alcohol
- All participants and volunteer's fingernails should be trimmed to a "working" length.
- Long hair should be pulled back with a band.
- Jewelry such as rings, bracelets and necklaces or dangling or protruding body piercings are not permitted while riding.

#### Use of stirrups:

- The program administrators may choose any one of three options to fulfill the safety standard for each riding participant who uses stirrups.
  - The participant will use stirrups with safety features.
  - The participant will wear riding boots or hard-soled shoes with heels in lieu of stirrups with safety features.
  - The participant will wear riding boots or hard-sole shoes with heels AND use stirrups with safety features.
- Participants should dress appropriately for the weather conditions so they can be comfortable during lessons. All participants must wear closed-toe shoes, or boots. Remember to layer clothing during cold weather and to wear warm coats, heavy socks, long underwear or tights, gloves and ear protection that will fit under the riding helmet.
- In warm weather, please remember to wear light-colored clothing and apply sunscreen before riding outdoors. Participants may also want to bring their own water bottles.

**If you have specific questions related to appropriate dress, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor or another lead team member at FHTRC.**

#### **FHTRC Expected Observation Behavior for Non-Riders and Volunteers**

**FHTRC encourages volunteers, families, caregivers, and friends to support their participants and observe instructional sessions. Doing so allows wonderful opportunities to observe accomplishments and learn strategies that enhance growth and development to apply to “real world” situations.**

It is important that all observers and volunteers help us by respecting and maintaining a “teaching, learning and growth” environment during sessions. To support this, we ask that non-riders and volunteers abide by the following:

- The instructor leads the session at all times.
  - The instructor is the ONLY person who will provide instruction or direct instruction to the participant(s).
  - Outside instructional comments or direction from non-riders is not permitted.
- The instructor leads the direction and management of the horses at all times.
  - The instructor is the ONLY person who will direct volunteers and support staff regarding handling of the horses.
- The structure or content of the lesson is determined by the instructor.
  - Non-riders and volunteers shall not interfere with the structure or activities within any session.
- Support and volunteers assisting with the lesson(s) shall be directed by the instructor
  - Non-riders/observers shall not comment to or direct in any way support staff or volunteers assisting with any lesson.
- Conversation, inquiries and questions regarding riders and/or the session are NOT permitted during the session.
  - Time permitting, the opportunity can be provided prior to or following a session for questions and answers.
  - If a volunteer, family member or caregiver has specific concerns or questions, it is recommended a convenient time be scheduled in advance of the lesson.
- Extraneous, loud and distracting conversations and behavior is not permitted while a lesson is underway.
  - Voices must be kept at a low, conversation level
- **Please supervise children at all times.** No running or fence climbing is allowed. Please encourage quiet play in the designated waiting and observation areas. This is for the safety of the children and to ensure that no horses are startled during lessons.

**Repetitious violation of this policy may result in an observer to not be permitted within the observation area during lessons.**

## FHTRC Lesson Scheduling Policy

**FHTRC is committed to providing a lesson structure for our participants that fosters physical, cognitive, emotional and social, and behavioral growth. This structure may incorporate private lessons, group lessons or both. The scheduling of lesson times with our participants and families is an undertaking that requires the coordination of instructors, volunteers, horses and sometimes additional professional support staff. Additionally, inclement weather and holidays also influence our scheduling. The information below is provided to assist with questions related to scheduling.**

Please be aware of the following scheduling practices:

- Lessons are scheduled in either private or group format.
- Scheduling is managed by the instructor or appointed team member.
- All questions, requests, and cancellations should be directed to the instructor.
- A 24-hour notice is requested for all cancellations – please refer to the Cancellation/No Show policy for details.

Inclement weather, school closings and the school calendar for holidays affect our scheduling.

- We follow the Wayne Highlands School District schedule and cancellations due to weather.
- If WHSD cancels or dismisses due to inclement weather, our sessions for that day are also canceled.
- If the reported high for any day is 25 degrees or less, our sessions may be canceled for that day.

Should you have questions regarding cancellations due to any of the above, please call 570-390-8695 to inquire between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm.

### **FHTRC Cancellation/No Show Policy for Participant (revised 8/30/21)**

**It is important to everyone involved in the work at FHTRC that our participants receive the services and attention that they need and deserve. It takes an enormous effort to coordinate the schedules of instructors, volunteers, support staff and our equine helpers!**

We are sympathetic to the fragile health of many of our participants. We also recognize the unforeseen challenges faced by the families who support our participants. However, late cancellations or not showing up for your scheduled session without just cause affects many. Therefore, we have outlined the following policy and request your cooperation with it.

- Once enrolled in a session, participants are responsible for attending all weekly lessons in that session.
- In the event you must cancel your lesson we require 24-hour notice. All lessons that have been canceled with 24-hours advance notice may be rescheduled.
- Cancellations without 24-hours advance notice due to an emergency will be rescheduled at the discretion of staff.
- If you “no-show,” or “no call,” or 24 hours is not given for a lesson the following policy applies:
  - The first occurrence will be forgiven, and you will be given the opportunity to make up the lesson.
  - After the first occurrence, subsequent violations will result in a charge of the full lesson fee as well as losing the opportunity to make up the lesson.

### **Cancellations by FHTRC and Inclement Weather Policy**

**We make every effort to follow through with our lesson schedule and avoid canceling sessions. However, there are situations that are unavoidable at times, such as equine health related issues, dangerous weather, and staffing. We appreciate your understanding and support regarding our cancellations policy.**

Please be aware of the following:

- We follow the Wayne Highlands School District. If WHSD cancels, lets out for early dismissal, or cancels after school activities due to inclement weather, our sessions for that day are also canceled.
- Weather related cancellations may be made due to the following:

- The reported high for any day is 20 degrees or less.
- The heat index for the day is above 97 degrees.
- Winds are expected to exceed 25 MPH.
- Tornado or hurricane warnings.
- Severe rain, or hail.
- Snow and/or hazardous driving conditions.
- Lessons may be canceled in advance if a **severe thunderstorm warning** is issued for the same time and location of the center where the lesson is scheduled.
- We consider weather reports the day before scheduled sessions to make this determination.
- Use [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for the location of the center affected.
- In the event of weather that the instructor determines is dangerous during a lesson—such as high winds, thunderstorms, or severe downpours that upset horses, the riders will be brought to the center of the arena and dismounted. Riders will be assembled in a safe area to wait for further instructions from the instructor. In the event of thunder, lessons may resume if no thunder is heard after 10 minutes. For the safety of our participants the instructor may deem necessary for the lesson to end, or move to an alternate activity for the remainder of the lesson.

### **FHTRC Payment Policy**

**FHTRC is committed to ensuring all riders who can benefit from our services are given the opportunity to receive them, regardless of financial status. We accept personal checks and payment may be mailed to PO Box 396, Waymart, PA 18472.**

Our approach to payment is flexible. To best manage payment for our services we ask the following parameters are followed:

- Payment is expected on the day of the lesson unless other arrangements have been made.
- Regardless of your payment preference, all accounts from the previous session must be brought current by the start of the next session, or your time slot may be forfeited.
- If you have questions regarding payment or a financial burden, please contact the executive director at 570-390-8695. The information will be taken to FHTRC management for review and consideration.

### **FHTRC Social Media Policy**

**Social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your experiences and opinions with family, friends and colleagues. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.**

At FHTRC, we are committed to creating a safe, “judgment free” zone for our riders and clients. We are sensitive to the complex and personal nature of the challenges they face. We respect that although some are very comfortable and willing to share their experiences, challenges and journey, others may not be as open to sharing. Our “Photo/Video/Information” policy is our display of commitment to protect our rider’s privacy when desired.

It is equally important for all volunteers, participants and their families to respect the desires and privacy of other riders, families, our program, and instructors, when using social media. YOU may be comfortable sharing information, but it is important that you exercise awareness and caution regarding sharing information about other riders and their families – they may not share the same comfort level as you.

Please exercise the following practices regarding social media, our programming and our riders:

- Please do not video or photograph other participants or personnel and share on social media. It is a private decision of families and participants whether or not they choose to be photographed, or video recorded and we must respect and keep confidential their preference.
- Please do not share on social media personal information regarding other participants or clients. Doing so would break our confidentiality policies.

- “Personal information” includes but is not limited to things such as:
  - Name
  - Diagnoses
  - Medical history
  - Family history
  - Any information, personal in nature
- Please share photos/videos/information that are positive in nature. Concerns or negative perspectives should be brought directly to the instructor or management of FHTRC and not displayed on a social media platform.

FHTRC feels strongly regarding conduct on social media. In the event a volunteer, client, a participant and/or their family or guardian(s) repeatedly and intentionally violate the privacy of our program or other clients, FHTRC may determine it necessary to remove them from our program.

### **FHTRC Family Custody Policy**

**FHTRC is an establishment that provides a public service. Therefore, we encounter a variety of custodial and living arrangements that directly impact our clients. It is our policy to be aware of and uphold any existing agreement that influences the care, safety and support of our riders.**

It is also the expectation of FHTRC, that any person accompanying the rider is doing so with full awareness of any custodial arrangement and is legally abiding by the arrangement. Failure to represent a participant in accordance with a legally-executed, custodial agreement while on a premise from which FHTRC operates, may result in:

- The representative of the participant being prohibited from accompanying the rider to future sessions
- A participant being prohibited from future sessions until legal arrangements are verified – thus resulting in a lapse of services.

To promote compliance with any existing custodial arrangements, please complete the questionnaire included at the beginning of this handbook.

### **Other Safety Guidelines and Policies**

- ❖ No smoking anywhere on the property, including parking areas.
- ❖ The speed limit on the farm is 5 MPH.
- ❖ Everyone is welcome to look but not touch, feed, or otherwise come in contact with any of the animals (cats included) unless the instructor or staff member allows and is present.
- ❖ **No one should be in the barn area except to use the bathroom**, or go into the office unless they have the express permission of a staff member and should be supervised at ALL times.
- ❖ Children who are not participating in the program must be supervised by their parent/guardian.
- ❖ Only participants and trained FHTRC personnel are allowed inside the activity area in the arena, unless the instructor feels a situation warrants assistance is needed from parent/guardian.
- ❖ No dogs or other pets are allowed on the property.
- ❖ Please be aware that sudden actions and loud noises such as shouting, clapping, or door banging may distract the horses from giving their participant a safe ride.
- ❖ **Treats must not be offered to the horses by anyone at any time.** If you wish to bring carrots or apples, you may leave them in the office. No other types of treats will be accepted. It is important for the horse’s health that these guidelines are followed. Donations of healthy treats for our hardworking volunteers are always welcome and they may be kept in the office.

FHTRC and the Board of Directors thank you for taking the time to review our policies.

Please remember to sign the acknowledgement of receiving and understanding these policies and procedures and return it with the other forms.

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns!



Business Address: PO Box 396, Waymart PA 18472  
Business Phone: 570-390-8695  
Email: FHTRC2019@gmail.com

Follow us on FaceBook  
**@FAIRHILLTHERAPEUTICRIDINGCENTER**

## Ways You Can Help

When you use PayPal to check out, make us your favorite charity and donate through the PayPal giving fund.

[paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/2315744](https://paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/2315744)

A dollar here and there can add up and make a difference.

We are a 501(C)3, Not-for-Profit Organization