



2024 Participant Handbook

Equestrian Programming

(for parent or guardian)



EquiCenter fosters growth, wellness, and educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities through the power of equestrian, horticultural and outdoor experiences.

Welcome to the EquiCenter! The purpose of this handbook is to share with you our policies and procedures. In it you will find a current class schedule, contact numbers, attire requirements and general rules.

Throughout the year, there are needs for updates and changes. We ask that you visit our website, www.equicenterny.org, for any current or anticipated changes that occur.

There are many opportunities for you to become involved in our program. Being a not-for-profit organization, you can help support us by volunteering in areas such as facilities, administration, special events, operational needs and of course our lesson program. Please contact Debi Houliares, our Volunteer Director, to see how you can get involved.

EquiCenter Contact Information

Barn Phone = 585-624-7777

Fax = 585-684-7863

General Email = Info@equicenterny.org

Director of Equine Operations

Lindsay Alberts: LAlberts@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777

Director of Equine Assisted Learning

Sara McLaughlin: SMcLaughlin@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777

Volunteer Director

Debi Houliares: DHouliares@equicenterny.org 585-624-7772

Executive Director

Katherine Hatch: KHatch@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777

PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors

Lindsay Alberts (Mentor): LAlberts@equicenterny.org

Debi Houliares (Mentor, ESMHL): DHouliares@equicenterny.org

Sara McLaughlin (Mentor): SMcLaughlin@equicenterny.org

Joan Maher: JMaher@equicenterny.org

Julie Moretti: JMoretti@equicenterny.org

Katie Hurlburt (Mentor): KHurlburt@equicenterny.org

Sam Schaubroeck (Mentor): SSchaubroeck@equicenterny.org

Molly Ryan: MRyan@equicenterny.org

Susan Gilson: SGilson@equicenterny.org

Audrey DiMatteo: ADimatteo@equicenterny.org

Heidi Vahue: HVahue@equicenterny.org

All of our instructors hold a PATH certification.

(Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International)

For more information on PATH please visit their website at www.pathintl.org

Cancellation Policy

We are unable to give credits for missed lessons with the exception of those listed below. Your lesson slot is yours for the duration of the session and given no rider is alike (i.e., requiring a particular horse, instructor, volunteer support etc) we cannot offer your missed lesson slot to any other participant. Although we are not able to offer credits for common illness, as a courtesy to our staff and volunteers, who are attempting to remain healthy in this season, we ask that the participant stays home when they are exhibiting symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea. Please make sure to call the barn phone (585-624-7777) ASAP if you need to cancel so we can give the volunteers and staff advanced notice of your absence.

- Due to the demands of the schedule, make-up lessons are not possible.
- Please call if you cannot make your scheduled time as soon as possible (24 hours is ideal) so that we do not have horses, volunteers and instructors waiting for you.
- Two “no calls” or “no shows” in a session may result in you being asked to forfeit your spot to someone on the waitlist.
- No monetary refunds or credits are given for missed lessons with exception given for the following reasons.

We do provide credits for the following absences:

- **Medical Credit** = Missed lesson for a major medical absence such as anything requiring medical attention or a doctor’s visit.
- **Scheduled Credit** = An absence that was communicated prior to the start of the session. We are able to take off the volunteers and arrange the staff and horse’s schedule when we are made aware of an absence prior to the start of the session. We allow up to one scheduled credit per session.
- **Weather Credit** = If EquiCenter cancels your lesson due to weather conditions or if the driving conditions in your area are declared a “warning” by the weather channel then we will issue you a credit.
 - If one or more local schools (i.e. Pittsford-Mendon, HF-L, Victor) are closed due to weather, lessons may also be canceled. If the weather is borderline contact us at 585-624-7777.
 - Adaptive riding lessons may be changed to non-mounted horsemanship lessons when the temperature is above 90 degrees or “feels like” over 95 degrees AND when the temperature is below 15 degrees or feels like less than 0 degrees.
- **EquiCenter or Instructor Credit** = Anytime EquiCenter cancels your lesson.

Please note that lesson credits must be used within one year of issuance

For Self-Directed Billing only:

- Agencies will not reimburse EquiCenter for any missed lessons.
- Direct billing on your behalf is a courtesy we extend to our families with the understanding you are responsible for payment of any balance which is not covered by Self Directed funds. This includes, but is not limited to, lessons that are not attended (other than for reasons noted above), lack of available funds in your budget, not properly completing any request for payment to the FI, or if you do not notify us of a change of FI / agency.

Registration

- A one time \$25 orientation fee will be collected at your evaluation.
- Due to PATH regulations we must receive complete registration forms annually. This includes the physician's statement.
- All paperwork must be complete and all payments must be made prior to any student being considered officially registered.
- Continuing registration forms are due 1 month prior to the start of each new session. A \$25 late fee will be applied to all registrations received after the deadline.
- Continuing registration forms should contain all of your days and times of availability. If you do not have at least 3 scheduling options we cannot guarantee you a lesson slot.
- The time reserved for each lesson includes time for mounting and dismounting, horsemanship and discussions.
- If the payment for the session is not collected by the end of the session, the participant will not be able to register for future sessions until balance is paid.

Fees

As inflation continues to impact our costs, EquiCenter had to make the difficult decision to increase lesson fees for 2024. We take pride in the care we provide to our herd of 30+ horses. Maintaining this high standard of care comes at a cost of approximately \$225 per lesson. We need to pay for the medications and vet services that our horses need as their bodies age, for gas to fuel the tractors and other equipment used to care for the horses as well as shavings, feed, supplements, and hay among all other necessary expenses our herd needs to continue offering life-changing experiences.

We are fortunate that the difference between the cost of providing lessons and the fees we charge are offset by generous donor gifts and a team of 200+ volunteers.

We realize that this increase may cause financial burden for some, and we encourage those who are in financial need to reach out for a scholarship application. EquiCenter will do its best to accommodate as many requests as possible.

Adaptive Riding *(we are not able to accommodate all selections every session)*

- Group 1 Hour: \$57 per lesson
- Semi-Private 1-hour: \$68 per lesson
- Semi-Private 45 minute: \$62 per lesson
- Private 1 hour: \$88 per lesson
- Private 45 minute: \$78 per lesson
- Private 30 minute: \$68 per lesson

Unmounted Horsemanship

- Semi-Private 1 hour: \$50 per lesson
- Semi-Private 45 minute: \$45 per lesson
- Semi-Private 30 minute: \$40 per lesson
- Private 1 hour: \$70 per lesson
- Private 45 minute: \$60 per lesson
- Private 30 minute: \$50 per lesson

Attire

- All students will wear approved ASTM safety helmets while mounted or when working around the horses. We have a selection available for you to borrow while riding or you may purchase your own at any local CountryMax store or online at www.doversaddlery.com or www.statelinetack.com. Helmets must be purchased within 5 years due to PATH regulations.
- Wear appropriate closed toe shoes. Boots with a low heel and smooth sole are recommended for all students who use stirrups.
- Long pants are required. Stretch pants or breeches are most comfortable.
- In cold weather, wear layers and make sure the student has gloves that will enable them to grip the reins. If the rider does not utilize reins, mittens are appropriate.
- In hot weather wear "breathable" clothing to avoid overheating. Sunscreen and a cold drink are encouraged!

Safety Rules

- Do not leave children unattended.
- While students are mounted a parent or guardian must remain on site for the entire lesson. The only exception is if the student is over 18 years old and they are their own legal guardian (please notify the instructor of this prior to beginning lessons).
- Do not allow children to run or play loudly. Keep children off the mounting ramp.
- Please leave the viewing area in an orderly manner. If toys are used please put them away.
- Do not visit the horses without permission and supervision.
- No hand feeding horses.
- EquiCenter is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is only permitted in your personal vehicle in the big parking lot. Take all butts with you - no littering.
- Your family members and friends are encouraged to visit. When lessons are in progress or horses are out, all visitors must remain in the designated spectator area.
- We encourage you to take photographs of your rider; however it is always best to ask staff permission prior to using a flash. Also make sure the volunteers are ok with their picture being taken.
- No pets are allowed on the property.
- Park in designated areas
- Abide by the speed limit (10mph). Our lessons and exercise riders frequently go on trail rides and fast moving vehicles are a safety hazard to both horses and humans.

Weight Policy for Adaptive Riding

Each horse has a set weight limit that they can carry which is based upon their size, age, confirmation and health history. In order to keep our horses comfortable and continuing to thrive, we have implemented a pre-session weigh-in.

We will ask you to weigh-in by the registration deadline of each session if you intend to sign up for the next session. This will help us to make the appropriate horse pairings for the upcoming session and create a schedule that balances out the horse's work load to the best of our ability.

We appreciate this may be a sensitive topic so the scale will be located in our office and your instructor or a staff member will be the only one assisting you. Since we are considering all the tack and rider weight on top of the horse, you will keep your helmet, boots and jacket on. If the participant is unable to stand on a scale we ask you to provide a doctor's note or copy of a recent exam with a weight that is within the last 3 months. Decisions regarding a participant's clearance to ride will be based on availability of a suitable horse relative to the height, cognition, and balance of the participant.

Contraindications to Adaptive Riding

Unfortunately riding is not an appropriate activity for everyone, and we may occasionally decline services for individuals for whom riding is contraindicated. As a PATH Premier Center (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International), we must follow PATH guidelines. Some examples are listed below:

- *Children under 2 years old
- *Atlantoaxial Instability (AAI) in Down Syndrome
- *Coxarthrosis
- *Limited Head/Neck Control
- *Hypotonia to the point where they are unable to maintain an upright seated position
- * Moderate to severe osteoporosis
- * Complete spinal cord injury above T-6
- * Uncontrolled seizures
- * Uncontrolled abusive behavior

Volunteers

These committed individuals make lessons at the EquiCenter possible. They help with lessons, horse care, administrative duties, fundraisers and numerous other areas that assist in making our lessons of high quality. EquiCenter thanks you in advance for your valuable time.

Interested parents and caregivers, who would like to volunteer, please contact EquiCenter at 585-624-7777 or DHouliares@equicenterny.com.

2024 Session Information

Session 1 2024

12 Week Session January 8th - March 31st
Includes a break week from February 19th-25th

BREAK WEEK April 1st - April 7th

Session 2 2024

12 Week Session
April 8th - June 30th
Includes a break week from May 27th - June 2nd

BREAK WEEK July 1st - July 7th

Session 3 2024

8 Week Session
July 8th - September 1st

BREAK WEEK September 2nd - 8th

Session 4 2024

15 Week Session
September 9th - December 22nd
Includes a break week from November 25th - 1st

BREAK WEEK December 23rd - January 5th