



EquiCenter

2026 Participant Handbook
Equestrian Programming
(for parent or guardian)



Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International



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 EquiCenter!

The purpose of this handbook is to share our policies and procedures.

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.

Included in this handbook, you will find:

1. Contact information
2. General Safety & Conduct Rules
3. Registration Procedures
4. Cancellation Policy and Credits
5. Billing Information
 - i. Self-Direction Billing
6. Fees
7. Attire
8. Weight Policy
9. Contraindications to Adaptive Riding
10. Reasons for Student Dismissal
11. Reasons for Visitor Dismissal
12. Volunteers
13. Programs
14. Session Schedule

There are many opportunities for you to become involved in our program. As a not-for-profit organization, you can help support us by volunteering in various areas, including facilities, administration, special events, operational needs, and our lesson program. Please contact Debi Houliares, Volunteer Director, to learn about opportunities for getting involved.

1. EquiCenter Contact Information

Barn Phone: 585-624-7777 Fax: 585-684-7863 General Email: info@equicenterny.org

Paperwork Email: participantpaperwork@equicenterny.org

Senior Director of Programming

Sara McLaughlin: SMcLaughlin@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777 Ext 2

Senior Director of Operations

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

Volunteer Director

Debi Houliares: DHouliares@equicenterny.org 585-624-7777

Executive Director

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

Accounting

accounting@equicenterny.org

PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors

Lindsay Alberts, LVT (Mentor)	LAlberts@equicenterny.org
Alexandra Covert	ACovert@equicenterny.org
Amberlea Atwood	AAtwood@equicenterny.org
Audrey DiMatteo	ADimatteo@equicenterny.org
Susan Gilson	SGilson@equicenterny.org
Julia Hess	JHess@equicenterny.org
Debi Houliares (Mentor, ESMHL)	DHouliares@equicenterny.org
Katie Hurlburt (Advanced, Mentor)	KHurlburt@equicenterny.org
Jana Magone	JMagone@equicenterny.org
Joan Maher	JMaher@equicenterny.org
Sara McLaughlin (Mentor)	SMcLaughlin@equicenterny.org
Molly Ryan (Mentor)	MRyan@equicenterny.org
Sam Schaubroeck (Advanced, Mentor)	Schaubroeck@equicenterny.org
Heidi Vahue	HVahue@equicenterny.org
Evelyn Van Arsdale	EVanasdale@equicenterny.org

PATH Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning

Colleen McDonough	CMcdonough@equicenterny.org
Phil Wytrwa	PWytrwa@equicenterny.org

PATH Equine Assisted Learning

Betsy Whitehouse

BWhitehouse@equicenterny.org

All of our instructors hold a PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) certification. For more information on PATH, please visit their website at www.pathintl.org

2. General Safety and Conduct Rules

- Children must be supervised at all times.
- For mounted lessons, a parent or legal guardian must remain on-site for the duration of the lesson, unless the rider is over 18, their own legal guardian, and the instructor has been notified in advance.
- Please do not run, play loudly, or use the mounting ramp.
- Keep the viewing and play areas tidy. Return any toys or materials after use.
- Visitors must stay in the designated spectator areas during lessons or when horses are present.
- Do not approach or visit horses without permission and supervision.
- Hand-feeding horses is not allowed. We do give treats within lesson times, out of treat bowls.
- You may take photos of your student, but please ask staff before using flash and ensure volunteers are comfortable being photographed.
- Pets are not permitted, except for approved service or therapy dogs with prior notification.
- Approved dogs must:
 - Remain on leash
 - Stay in designated areas
 - Stay away from horses and the barn
 - Be kept separate from other animals
- Participation in some programs may be limited when accompanied by a service or therapy dog.
- EquiCenter is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is only permitted in your vehicle in the main parking lot. Please dispose of all waste properly.
- Park only in designated areas.
- Drive slowly - speed limit is 10 mph - to ensure the safety of riders, pedestrians, and horses.

3. Registration

- A one-time \$40 orientation fee which will be invoiced for online payment.
- Due to PATH regulations, we must receive complete registration forms annually. This includes the physician's statement for adaptive riding.
- All paperwork must be complete, and all payments must be made before any student is considered officially registered.
- Continuing registration forms are due 6 weeks before 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 the balance is paid.
- If any changes need to be made, such as medical, address, or the person responsible for payment, etc., please notify the Senior Director of Programming.
- EquiCenter must be notified before a lesson if a student has had a seizure, received medical attention, or had medication changes, is hospitalized, or experiences anything that would affect behavior, safety, or functioning while at their lesson.

4. Cancellations and Credits

To ensure continuity of service and to maximize learning and therapeutic benefits of our program, we break our year into sessions. Your assigned lesson slot is yours

exclusively for the session and cannot be filled if you are unable to attend. Scheduling of equine staff and volunteers is also built around this fixed session schedule. You will be billed for missed lessons; we can only offer lesson credits in limited circumstances.

Weather: Therapeutic 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. This decision is made between the instructor and the student/parent. If an unmounted lesson is not appropriate, you will be issued a weather credit. Additionally, if local schools (i.e., Pittsford-Mendon, HF-L, Victor) are closed due to weather, lessons will also be cancelled. We also recognize that the weather in our region can vary greatly from town to town; therefore, if travel conditions are unsafe from your location to EquiCenter, please contact us at 585-624-7777 to advise us.

EquiCenter Cancellation: If EquiCenter cancels your lesson for any reason (e.g., staffing or volunteer availability).

Medical: Major medical illness, including hospitalization and surgeries. Please notify the Senior Director of Programming as soon as possible.

Pre-Approved Scheduled: EquiCenter may issue one credit per session for a lesson cancellation arranged before the start of the session, using the Google Cancellation Form, which can be found in the handbook, the session confirmation email, or on the website.



Credits must be used within one year of issuance.

In summary:

- 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 call, 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 exceptions detailed above.

5. Billing Information

For **Self-Paying Billing** only:

The full session is billed to all self-paying participants at the start of each session. It is your responsibility to inform us of any changes to your contact information or the person responsible for payment.

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 the payment of any balance that is not covered by Self-Directed funds. This includes but is not limited to lessons that are not attended (other than for reasons noted as credits above in Section 4), 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.

6. Fees

We take pride in the care we provide to our herd of 40+ horses. Maintaining this high standard of care costs approximately \$225 per lesson. We are fortunate that the difference between the cost of providing lessons and the fees we charge is offset by generous donor gifts and a team of 200+ volunteers.

MOUNTED LESSONS	Per Class	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
Private 1 Hour	\$94	\$1,034	\$1,034	\$846	\$1,222
Private 45 mins	\$82	\$902	\$902	\$738	\$1,066
Private 1/2 Hour	\$72	\$792	\$792	\$648	\$936
Semi-Private 1 Hour	\$72	\$792	\$792	\$648	\$936
Semi-Private 45 mins	\$66	\$726	\$726	\$594	\$858
Semi-Private 30 mins	\$59	\$649	\$649	\$531	\$767
Group 1 Hour	\$61	\$671	\$671	\$549	\$793
UNMOUNTED LESSONS	Per Class	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
Private 1 Hour	\$74	\$814	\$814	\$666	\$962
Private 45 mins	\$64	\$704	\$704	\$576	\$832
Private 1/2 Hour	\$54	\$594	\$594	\$486	\$702
Semi-Private 1 Hour	\$54	\$594	\$594	\$486	\$702
Semi-Private 45 mins	\$47	\$517	\$517	\$423	\$611
Semi-Private 30 mins	\$42	\$462	\$462	\$378	\$546

We encourage those in financial need to reach out to request a scholarship application, which can be found on the website under the Participant Resources page. EquiCenter will do its best to accommodate as many requests as possible.

7. Attire

- All students will wear approved ASTM safety helmets while mounted. We have a selection available for you to borrow, or you may purchase your own at any CountryMax store or online at www.doversaddlery.com or www.statelinetack.com. Helmets must be purchased within five (5) years due to PATH Intl Standards.

- Wear appropriate closed-toed shoes. Inappropriate footwear includes Uggs, Converse, slip-on sneakers, Sperry's/boat shoes, Crocs, and sandals, as they do not provide sufficient protection. It is recommended for students who use stirrups to wear proper riding boots (smooth-soled boots with a heel). We have a limited number of boots available.
- Long pants are requested. Stretch pants or breeches are most comfortable.
- In cold weather, wear layers. For riding students, make sure to have gloves that will enable them to grip the reins, or utilize mittens if they don't use reins. Hats cannot be worn under the helmet, as they impact the fit of the helmet. Some options include: helmet covers, 180s, neck tubes, or gaiters.
- In hot weather, wear breathable clothing to avoid overheating. Sunscreen and a cold drink are encouraged.

8. Weight Policy for Adaptive Riding

Each horse has a set weight limit that they can carry, which is based on their size, age, confirmation, and health history. To keep our horses comfortable and continue to thrive, we have implemented a weigh-in process, which will happen during the session. This will help us to make the appropriate horse pairings for the upcoming session and create a schedule that balances out the horses' workload to the best of our ability.

We appreciate that 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 a 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 the availability of a suitable horse relative to the height, cognition, and balance of the participant.

9. 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
- Moderate to severe osteoporosis
- Atlantoaxial Instability (AAI) in Down Syndrome
- Complete spinal cord injury above T-6
- Coxarthrosis
- Uncontrolled seizures
- Limited Head/Neck Control
- Uncontrolled abusive behavior
- Hypotonia to the point where they are unable to maintain an upright seated position

10. Reasons for Student Dismissal (Including caretaker/guardian)

Possible reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to obey posted safety regulations
- Inappropriate or unsafe behavior
- Two (2) no call, no show for scheduled lessons
- Violating any of our posted safety rules
- Posing a safety risk to our students, volunteers, staff, or horses

- Any other reason or behavior identified by staff to be inappropriate or detrimental to or potentially detrimental to safety or lesson conduct.

11. Reasons for Visitor or Guest Removal

EquiCenter may dismiss any guest/ visitor.

- Failure to obey posted safety regulations
- Inappropriate or unsafe behavior
- Violating any of our posted safety rules
- Posing a safety risk to our students, volunteers, staff, or horses
- Any other reason or behavior identified by staff to be inappropriate or detrimental to or potentially detrimental to safety or lesson conduct.

12. Volunteers

These committed individuals make lessons at 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 ext 3 or DHouliares@equicenterny.com.

13. Programs

- Summer Program - 13 and under
- Farm Friends - 18+
- Social Squad - 18+
- Pony Parties - all ages

2026 Session Schedule

Session 1

- 11 week session from January 5th - March 28th
- Mid-session break week from February 15th - February 22nd (No Lessons)

BREAK WEEK March 29th - April 5th (No Lessons)

Session 2

- 11 week session from April 6th - June 27th
- Mid-session break week May 24th - May 31st (No Lessons)
- ***EquiCenter Horse Show, May 30th***

BREAK WEEK June 29th - July 5th (No Lessons)

Session 3

- 9 week session from July 6th - September 5th

BREAK WEEK September 7th - September 12th (No Lessons)

Session 4

- 13 week session from September 14th - December 19th
- Mid-session break week November 23rd - November 28th (No Lessons)

BREAK WEEK December 21st - January 3rd (No Lessons)