



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

UPDATED JANUARY 2020



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## GENERAL INFORMATION & ABOUT US

### OUR MISSION

The mission of Saddle Up! is to provide children and youth with disabilities the opportunity to grow and develop through therapeutic, educational, and recreational activities with horses.

**ADDRESS:** 1549 Old Hillsboro Rd.  
Franklin, TN 37069

**PHONE:** (615) 794-1150 x290 Lesson Hotline  
**FAX:** (615) 794-7973

**WEBSITE:** [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org)

\*The Lesson Hotline (x290) is reserved for messages regarding tardiness or absences. If you (volunteer) are going to be absent, please email us at [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org)

Staff:	Executive Director	Laurie Kush	x340
	Finance & Admin Director	Stephanie Louder	x220
	Program Operations Director	Lindsey Wood	x240
	Program Administrator	Sarah Chenevert	x300
	Volunteer Services Director	Sally Stonage	x230
	Development Director	Knox Brewer	x320
	Development Associate	Tricia Ward	x350
	Property Director	Russell Harkai	x260
	Equine Coordinator/Program Instructor	Sutter Woodliff	x250
	Barn Manager	Natalie Pauley	x300

### ABOUT OUR STAFF

- All Saddle Up! Instructors are required to hold a PATH International Professional Certification in their program field.
- All Saddle Up! Therapists are required to attend trainings through the American Hippotherapy Association.

### ABOUT OUR HORSES

- They are all required to go through a trial period in order for us to access their appropriateness for our program.
- Before entering the program, they must pass their Instructor/Therapist evaluations with more than an 80% pass rate.
- Each horse has a nutrition, conditioning, and training plan in order to maintain optimal health.

### ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP (PATH) INTERNATIONAL:

- PATH International is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists.
- Saddle Up! is a PATH International Premier Accredited Center.
- Saddle Up! follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for determining eligibility for our programs.
- Professional certifications through PATH International provide staff with disability education and horsemanship training specific to the program
- 

### PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR...

- History of the organization
- Program details and schedule
- Upcoming events
- Current list of staff
- Current list of Board of Directors
- Current list of horses and their biographies
- Other ways YOU can support Saddle Up!



Professional Association of Therapeutic  
Horsemanship International

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### **OUR PROGRAMS**

Saddle Up! is a PATH International Premier Accredited Center which provides high quality services in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies. Based on your child's needs and interests we can provide quality services through Adaptive Riding, Therapy Services, Equine Assisted Learning, Equine Assisted Learning, Saddle Up! Equestrian Club, Interactive Vaulting, and/or Alumni Transitions. To find out more information about our services and how to get your child involved, please review the information below. More details about each program is available on our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org).

Saddle Up! also understands financial concerns some of our families may experience, and do all we can to assist. Our goal is to allow the families to focus on the health and well-being of their child. To accomplish this, Saddle Up! absorbs \$100.00 of the \$130.00 cost per child per ride.

### **WHY THE HORSE?**

Nothing can compare to the power of the horse. The auto industry has put "horsepower" into their engines for decades, but there is a "horse power" beyond strength and speed that only a real horse can provide. We partner with our herd to offer children and youth with disabilities a unique environment to grow and develop. Our horses provide movement, support, learning opportunities, strength, stability, companionship, and much more to participants in all of our different programs. To see the horses in action and the amazing power they have to offer, feel free to schedule a visit for you and your family.

### **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

Saddle Up! serves children and youth with disabilities between the ages of 2 and 24 years old. Additional eligibility requirements differ depending on the program, please visit our website for more information. Saddle Up! follows the PATH International Precautions and Contraindications for participant eligibility in all of our programs.

### **ADAPTIVE RIDING**

Saddle Up!'s Adaptive Riding (AR) program is an equine-assisted activity in which participants work on their mounted and unmounted horsemanship skills. Our PATH International Certified Instructors adapt the lesson for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of children with disabilities. Secondary benefits that have been observed by Saddle Up! families include improvements in balance, endurance, coordination, communication, speech, attention, and much more. Our Adaptive Riding program serves children with disabilities from the age of 4 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **THERAPY SERVICES**

Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services (TS) offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language therapy that incorporates equine movement as a treatment strategy. Our therapists skillfully direct the movement of the horse to challenge and engage the client's neuromuscular and sensorimotor systems to address the client's challenges, such as deficits in balance, endurance, coordination, communication, speech, and attention. Therapy Services treats clients with disabilities as young as 2 years old.

### **EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING**

Saddle Up!'s Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) program is an experiential learning approach which involves students interacting with horses to build self-confidence, improve social skills, and reinforce academic skills. Using the barn as a dynamic classroom, students also get to participate in arts, crafts, games, and discovery. This program is designed for students Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with learning and/or social differences.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW CONT.**

### **EQUESTRIAN CLUB**

The Saddle Up! Equestrian Club (SUEC) is comprised of riders who have excelled through the Adaptive Riding program and are working on mastering their horsemanship skills. Each SUEC meeting gives riders the opportunity to participate in class work, barn work, riding, and horse care. Riders are children with disabilities who have achieved Level #4 in RIDES®, through our Adaptive Riding program, and show continued interest in excelling their horsemanship skills.

### **INTERACTIVE VAULTING**

Saddle Up!'s Interactive Vaulting (IV) program is an equine-assisted activity in which participants perform movements on and around the horse while the horse is being lunged on a circle. During a lesson, our PATH International Certified Vaulting Instructor directs vaulters to interact with each other and their horse in many different ways in order to foster teamwork and independence, teach respect for the horse, build confidence, and encourage social interaction. Our Interactive Vaulting program serves children and youth with disabilities from the age of 6 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **ALUMNI TRANSITIONS**

Saddle Up!'s Alumni Transitions (AT) program is for Saddle Up! Graduates. They will continue their Adaptive Riding education and combine it with vocational and life skills to enhance their quality of life and community impact. During a lesson, our PATH International Certified Instructor will lead graduates in a 1.5 hour lesson that includes learning activities, riding, and vocational skills. Our Alumni Transitions program serves youth with disabilities from the age of 19 through their 24th birthday.

### **EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING**

Equine Assisted Learning is a summer only, equine assisted learning program in which participants get to come out to Saddle Up! for a week and discover the farm from our herd's point of view. Activities such as nature hikes, horse handling, crafts, water play, and riding lessons will teach students leadership, teamwork, and problem solving skills... and they'll have so much fun they won't even know they are learning! Our Fun on the Farm program is designed for children and youth with disabilities from the age of 6 through their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For more information about our programs, please visit our website [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org)

## SADDLE UP! RULES

Saddle Up! asks that all of its participants, parents, volunteers and staff understand and adhere to the following rules.

1. This is a program that celebrates diversity and sees value in all the participants. Respect and cordiality towards all participants is expected.
2. Respect Saddle Up! facilities, materials, animals, and all participants' confidentiality.
3. No smoking on Saddle Up! property.
4. No alcoholic beverages on the premises except for Executive Board approved functions.
5. All participants, staff, and volunteers are required to wear closed-toe shoes, preferably boots or tennis shoes, when past the lobby and office area. Visitor and special guests without appropriate footwear will be allowed on staff guided tours, but for their own safety will not be allowed to interact with horses.
6. Do not climb on any fences or enter pastures.
7. Do not feed or pet Saddle Up! horses through the fences and gates.
8. Parents/guardians are to remain in the lobby during programming, unless they have special permission from a staff person.
9. Any volunteer who exhibits behavior that is potentially dangerous to themselves or our horses, other volunteers, participants and/or staff can be dismissed from the activity and/or program.
10. Saddle Up! will take appropriate measures up to and including calling the local police department if a staff person suspects that a parent or volunteer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
11. Saddle Up! is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Saddle Up! is committed to ensuring the safety of all program participants and volunteers.
12. All persons on the property outside of the lobby must sign a volunteer waiver or visitor release form.
13. For the safety of all participants, pets are not allowed on the Saddle Up! property, with the exception of service animals.
14. Saddle Up! asks you to please refrain from bringing treats for the horses. Please refer to "Ways to Say Thank You" for suggestions on gifts for the horses.
15. No firearms or explosives on Saddle Up! property.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR RULE INFRACTIONS

### Level 1: Verbal Warning

- Breaking of the rules will be followed by a verbal warning from the supervisor in the area you are serving.
  - Sidewalker = Instructor/Therapist
  - Leader = Instructor / Therapist
  - Stable Hand = Barn or Equine Manager
  - Feeder = Barn Manager
  - Pony Pal = Equine Manager
- The warning will be documented in the volunteer's file.

### Level 2: Written Warning

- Breaking of the rules for a second incident will be followed by a discussion with the supervisor and Program Director with a written warning issued by the Program Director. The written warning will be placed in the volunteer's file.
- Action steps will be outlined to prevent future rule infractions, and a follow up meeting scheduled.

### Level 3: Dismissal from the Organization

Anyone facing dismissal from the organization will be informed by a written notice and a discussion with the Executive Director and the Program Manager. The following infractions are grounds for immediate dismissal from the organization.

- Theft
- Inappropriate use of the facilities, mailing lists or monies.
- Abuse of the animals or properties.
- Repeated disregard of the organization's policies and procedures.
- Harassment of, or inappropriate behavior toward any staff member, volunteer or student.
- Use, possession of, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on Saddle Up! property.

## VISITORS

We allow friends and other family members to visit the program.

- Visitors **MUST** remain in the family area, therapy room, or outdoor family courtyard during lessons. If the scheduled activity cannot be observed from the family area or courtyard then visitors will not be able to observe that activity.
- Special permission can be obtained by the instructor for the visitor to observe from the bleachers and this request needs to be made prior to the start of the lesson.
- If visitors want a tour of the facility, they must sign a Visitor Release form and be wearing closed toed shoes. We can only accommodate this request if a staff person or trained volunteer is available to provide the tour. If you know your visitor will want a tour, please contact the office a few days in advance to schedule the tour.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- I. **GENERAL PRINCIPLE:** Saddle Up! shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in its program. Participants, their families, and our volunteers have a right to privacy that gives them control over the dissemination of their personal, medical or other sensitive information.
- II. **INFORMATION COVERED BY THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** The staff shall keep confidential all medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding a person and his/her family. This includes mailing lists for the organization.
- III. **PERSONS SUBJECT TO THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** Anyone who works or volunteers for, or provides services to Saddle Up! is bound by this policy. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Full and part-time staff
  - b. Independent contractors
  - c. Temporary employees
  - d. Volunteers
  - e. Board members
- IV. **COMPETENCY AND INFORMED CONSENT DISCLOSURE:** A participant may not be competent to give consent for disclosure of medical or sensitive information or both (including photographs and videotapes) because of age or mental incapacity. Only parent(s), legal representatives or others defined by state statute have this authority.
- V. **INTRA-AGENCY ACCESS TO AND DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL AND/OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION:** No access to, or disclosure of medical and/or sensitive information will be made without a participant's consent based on a perceived need to protect staff or anyone else from possible exposure through casual contact. Universal precautions will be used with all participants under the assumption that all participants may have been exposed to infectious disease.
- VI. **EXTRA-AGENCY DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL AND/OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION:** Disclosure of information to outside agencies or individuals will be made only with specific written consent of the participant or guardian.
- VII. **WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:** Each volunteer and staff member for Saddle Up! has signed a written statement acknowledging this policy.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Saddle Up! could not operate without the dedicated help of an army of volunteers from our community. There are numerous positions that require a wide variety of talents. The areas marked with (\*) will require prior experience or training (other than New Volunteer Training) that will be provided for you. All Volunteers **must** attend an Orientation before participating in any of the below listed opportunities. Any Opportunity which relates to horses or lessons requires prior attendance at a Horse Handling Clinic.

### OPPORTUNITIES IN LESSONS

#### **Lesson Team**

Consistency in the Lesson Team is very important. When possible, Saddle Up! creates and maintains the same team (instructor, sidewalker, leader, child) for the entire session. Where possible, we strongly recommend that a volunteer commits to a minimum of one lesson a week for a session. A floating Sub can be scheduled to substitute in cases of emergencies.

#### **Sidewalkers**

The primary responsibility of a sidewalker (Interactive or Supportive) is to ensure the safety of the rider. This is usually done by walking beside the horse's girth with one arm poised at the rider's thigh or the heel. The degree of assistance from the sidewalker will depend on the balance of the rider. Sidewalkers, who accompany poorly balanced riders, must be a good fit with the height of the horse and be in good physical condition. (Sidewalkers must be at least 18 years old and able to walk briskly beside a horse for an average of 30 minutes.)

#### **Interactive Sidewalker**

The interactive sidewalker is an extension of the instructor. Interactive sidewalkers talk and interact directly with the rider during grooming and during the lesson. They may be asked to teach the grooming tools and steps, repeat the directions given by the instructor, assist the rider in performing these directions and monitor for specific skills. (\*Interactive sidewalkers should be comfortable with the child's disability, have a minimal understanding of grooming, riding commands and horse parts, and be confident in following the instructor's directions.)

#### **Supportive Sidewalker**

The supportive sidewalker will not have a verbal role in the lesson, however they will be hands-on with the rider. The supportive sidewalker will focus solely on the rider, ensuring safety during the lesson. The supportive sidewalker will be in different levels of physical contact with the rider, depending on the rider's needs. (NO experience is required.)

#### **Leaders\***

The main responsibility of the leader is to control the horse during grooming, ground and mounted lessons. Most riders who have leaders are unable to fully control their horses. It is the leader who must help in guiding, stopping and starting without making the rider feel that they are simply a passenger. The rider must be allowed to do as much as possible with the leader helping only when necessary. Leaders must be able to walk at a fast pace for 30 minutes and jog intermittently during the lesson. (\*Leaders are volunteers over the age of 16 and should be very comfortable with horses and react calmly if an incident arises. Attendance at the Leader Training Clinic and a recommendation from an Equine Team Member are needed prior to beginning in lessons.

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BARN

### **Feeders**

Our horses are fed each morning and each evening by staff and 2-3 trained volunteers. The feeders are given a calendar of the feeding schedule. This can be flexible. For example, we have feeders that feed one evening every week and others that feed the third Saturday evening of each month. The frequency is up to your schedule and may be traded with other feeders if you have an emergency. (\*Requires some training, and attendance at our Horse Handling Clinic. Must be at least 18 years old or accompanied by a trained volunteer over 18 years old. Prior horse experience is helpful.)

### **Stable Hands**

Stable hands take care of the barn chores during lesson times. We will teach you how to groom our horses. Horses should be ready for the instructors to arrive and begin tacking for lessons. Stalls are cleaned each day. (\*Requires some training and attendance at our Horse Handling Clinic. Prior horse experience is helpful. Stable Hands may be adults or Junior Volunteers 12 to 18 years old. At any given time we may have 20-30 volunteers and 10-15 riders on the farm. With our limited staff, it is impossible for us to directly oversee the activities of all volunteers at all times. Therefore, Saddle Up! requires all Junior volunteers under 16 years old to be directly supervised by a parent at all times while participating in a volunteer activity. This means that a parent must be volunteering in a lesson or stable hand position while their child is volunteering as a stable hand. There may come a time when the Junior volunteer has demonstrated that their maturity and skills are at the level where the Director determines a parent is no longer needed – we will notify you of this exception. For some junior volunteers it may be six months – others may not progress to this point until they reach age 16.

### **Pony Pals**

Pre-requisite is at least 12 weeks of consistent volunteer activity as a Lesson Team Volunteer, Feeder or Stablehand before applying to be a Pony Pal. A Pony Pal must also pass a riding evaluation by the Equine Manager. Prior horse experience is essential as a Pony Pal's skill level must be at or above the level of the horse's training. Junior volunteers may be eligible if their ground skills and/or riding level matches a horse's needs)

Our history has shown having a need to have people assigned to each horse that can deliver consistent attention and training for that horse. Without this consistent handling and attention, horses tend to go sour as therapeutic horses. Pony Pals are appointed to ride and/or ground train a designated horse or pony. Each Pony Pal must follow the Schooling Schedule provided by the Saddle Up! Equine Team as well as the organization Rules and Best Practice procedures for handling the Saddle Up! horses. You will report directly to the Equine Manager and Director about your horse's progress and needs. You must be able to make a weekly commitment to your assigned horse and take good detailed notes.

## VOLUNTEER CANCELLATIONS

Volunteers are critical to the success of the program. When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed to safely serve a participant. Please reserve cancelling your schedule day and time for emergencies. If you **MUST** cancel, please contact Saddle Up! as soon as possible so a replacement may be found. In addition, we ask that you please try to volunteer another day to make up for your absence.

If you know days in advance that you will miss a volunteer commitment, you can contact Volunteer Services staff by phone or email and provide the date and time of your upcoming absence.

Email [attendance@saddleupnashville.org](mailto:attendance@saddleupnashville.org) with date and time of your absence. If you are calling, you should call Saddle Up! at (615) 794-1150. Either leave a message with the person who answers or leave message on the Lesson Hotline extension 290.

## VOLUNTEER ATTIRE

- Dress appropriately for each volunteer activity and weather conditions.
- Tie back long hair.
- Remove dangling earrings, loose watches/rings.
- Wear sturdy shoes that enclose your foot (no Crocs, clogs or sandals).
- Avoid short shorts, halter tops, tops with spaghetti straps or anything revealing.
- If riding, wear an ASTM-SEI approved helmet and sturdy shoes that enclose the entire foot.
- Leave cell phones in your car or put on vibrate.

## HORSE CARE AND HANDLING

The following are horse handling practices followed by Saddle Up!. Our therapy horses require consistent handling by everyone in order to remain well trained and safe. All volunteers are expected to follow these practices.

- Talk to your horse while stroking or patting him to let him know you are a friend.
- Slide the halter up over his muzzle on to the horse's head. The crown piece should come across the horse's head right behind the ears.
- Fasten the throat latch clip to the left side of the halter.

### SECURING YOUR HORSE

When is time to groom or saddle your horse, you will need a way to keep the horse standing still while you work. We do NOT groom in the stalls, but use cross ties to secure the horse. Cross ties are two straps attached high up on each side and they are located in the indoor/outdoor grooming stalls and vet stall.

- Each strap has a snap or clip on the end to attach to the halter.
- Attach the cross ties to the square side rings on the part of the halter that goes around the horse's muzzle.
- Never attach cross ties directly to the bridle.
- Ensure that the length of rope is not too tight or too loose for the size horse.
- Never step over or reach over the cross ties at the horse's head.
- Walk under the cross ties near the pole, NEVER walk under the horse's neck.
- Never walk behind the horse while in the cross ties.
- Never leave a horse unattended in the cross ties.

## **LEAD YOUR HORSE**

- Typically, you should be on your horse's left, leading between his head and shoulders unless instructed otherwise.
- Place your right hand on the lead rope about six to twelve inches from the halter.
- Never hold on to the halter or any part of the bridle.
- Hold the excess rope with your left hand. If the lead rope is very long, double the excess back and forth in a figure eight pattern. Make sure the rope in between your hands does not hang down below your knees as it could cause you to trip.

## **GENERAL HORSE INFORMATION**

### **HORSE BEHAVIOR**

Horse behavior will teach you the characteristics of the horse and give you an understanding of the horse's reasons for certain actions or habits. When you know why a horse does something, you will be better prepared to respond to him properly. It is important that you know the horse's traits and instinctive responses. They vary different degrees in every horse, but they are common to all.

### **HERD INSTINCT**

All horses possess a strong group or herd instinct. In their wild state, there was safety in numbers. For this reason, an untrained horse will not leave the group unless he is forced to, and even then, he may attempt to remain with the other horses. Another way the horse shows his group instinct is in his desire to mimic other horses. If one horse shies, they all will shy. When one bucks, they all want to. Horses obey humans through habit and training. They don't know that they are bigger and stronger, or they would realize that they don't need to obey us. When you handle a horse, you are either helping his training or hurting it. If you always handle horses properly, using the same rewards and punishments they are used to, they will keep their training and remain obedient.

### **REWARD AND PUNISHMENT**

Horses are trained by reward and punishment. They learn how to obey commands and to do or not to do certain things by connecting these things with pleasant (reward) or unpleasant (punishment) feelings. A horse can only pay attention to a reward or punishment for about 3 seconds. This means that the pleasant or unpleasant feelings must come immediately after the horse has done something right or wrong. A few minutes later will be too late and he won't understand why he is being rewarded or punished.

### **POSSESSIVENESS**

Horses can be possessive about their food, their stall, or their friends. For this reason, it is a good idea not to bother a horse while he is eating his grain. He may think that you are teasing him or trying to take it away from him and may get angry.

### **COURAGE AND LAZINESS**

Most horses are a little lazy about working for people. Horses like to do things the easy way and they don't make any more work for themselves than they have to. This leads them to find ways to cheat when the work gets hard or boring, just like kids looking out a window in school. Horses are surprisingly generous. They will often continue to obey their riders even after they are tired or hurting. This is a special kind of courage that horsemen call heart.

### **FEARFUL**

Horses are very big, powerful and fearful creatures. If they are frightened, they will try to run away from whatever scares them. They can be scared and startled by many things that don't bother people. Things that may frighten a horse include loud noises, sudden movements, and things that move toward them suddenly. When a horse is nervous or frightened, he will often calm down if someone gives him confidence by keeping him under control. Be kind but firm, soothing him with quiet words. If you act frightened or nervous, your horse may become more frightened himself. He will feel that something must be wrong if you are frightened.

**HORSE SENSES**

**Touch** - Horses use touch to examine strange objects. They will look, sniff, and then feel the object with their muzzle and lips. The horse's sense of touch is very sensitive. He can feel a fly land on his skin and is able to detect a very light touch or pressure. We depend on his sense of touch in most riding and training. Horses are trained by applying and removing pressure, sometimes gentle pressure and sometimes painful pressure.

**Smell and Taste** – These senses are related quite loosely. Horses have a keen sense of smell and can detect odors that humans cannot. Horses may recognize familiar horses or people by their familiar scent.

**Hearing** - A horse's hearing is very acute. His ears can swivel like radar screens to seek out sounds in any direction. He can hear very soft sounds, like a rustle in the bushes which might conceal a predator. Since their hearing is very acute, it is not necessary to shout voice commands at horses to make them hear. They can hear you just as well if you talk quietly to them.

**PHOTOS/VIDEOS & SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES****PHOTOS & VIDEOS**

- NO flash photography.
- You must have permissions from the Instructor/Therapist prior to taking photos/video of programs.
- Do not lean through the arena railing or fencing for a photo/video.
- Do not enter the arena or pasture for a photo/video.
- Do not photograph or video another person's child.
- If you realize you have a photo or video with another person's child in it, please delete it.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

- We ask that you keep social media posts about Saddle Up! positive and encouraging.
- Do not post photos or videos that include other people's children.
- Do not post photos or videos with identifying information about volunteers.
- Do not tag Saddle Up! in a social media post without permission from our marketing department.
- Always comply with copyright and fair use laws when publishing something on a social media platform.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER & TEMPERATURE****INCLEMENT WEATHER GUIDELINES**

- Due to our indoor arena and classroom, Saddle Up! is able to operate programs in many different types of weather and throughout the year. Saddle Up! defines inclement weather as weather that affects the safety of conducting programs or traveling to the farm for participants, volunteers, and staff. Inclement weather could include snow, ice, flooding, etc.
- The decision to cancel programs due to inclement weather will be made by the Saddle Up! staff.
- Communications regarding program cancellations are sent out via Facebook, email, text messages, or phone calls prior to the scheduled program time whenever possible.
- Inclement weather is assessed by monitoring weather forecasts and evaluating roads conditions.
- We DO NOT follow the local school system for program cancellation.
- If sudden inclement weather occurs during program activities, the instructor/therapist has ultimate responsibility for participants, volunteers, and horses.
- If you are not sure whether Saddle Up! programs are operating due to inclement weather please contact the Lesson Hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 for more information.

**TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES**

The temperature will be based on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for Franklin, TN (zip code 37069) at the time the mounted programs occur. Hot and cold weather is evaluated due to medical conditions of participants, volunteer/staff comfort due to amount of time to be exposed, and horse health.

**Heat:**

- If the heat index is above 95 °F, all programs must stay in the indoor arena/barn area and mounted programs will be limited to being walk only. Participants and volunteers/staff will be evaluated for heat tolerance as needed.
- If the heat index is 100 °F or above, mounted programs will not occur and participants will be evaluated for heat tolerance as needed.
  - Adaptive Riding, Interactive Vaulting, Alumni Transitions, and Equestrian Club lessons will take place off the horse in the form of unmounted horsemanship activities.
  - Therapy Services appointments will take place in the therapy room utilizing the MiraColt.
  - Equine Assisted Learning will occur as usual.

**Cold:**

- If the actual temperature is below 32 °F degrees, mounted lessons/appointments will not occur and participants will be evaluated for cold tolerance as needed.
  - Adaptive Riding, Interactive Vaulting, Alumni Transitions, and Equestrian Club lessons will take place off the horse in the form of unmounted horsemanship activities, preferably in the classroom or therapy room.
  - Therapy Services appointments will take place in the therapy room utilizing the MiraColt.
  - Equine Assisted Learning will occur as usual.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY PROCESS

**Inform a staff person immediately of any type of emergency and follow their instructions.**

**A staff person trained in CPR/First Aid will evaluate the person, provide care as needed, and determine whether emergency services are needed.**

**If the injured party has fallen from some type of height (i.e. horse), have them remain on the ground and still until evaluated by a staff person trained in CPR/First Aid.**

**Secure all horses in the area/arena by ensuring they are on-lead and move them away from the injured party.**

- If this type of emergency occurs during a program, please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Volunteers remain with their assigned participant or horse, unless told differently.
  - The Instructor/Therapist will decide whether to dismiss or resume the program/activity.
  - Parents and guardians should not approach the scene until asked to by the Instructor/Therapist.
- Any additional people or participants (not needed for medical support) in the area/arena should be diverted to another location to give the injured party privacy.

### EMERGENCY DISMOUNT PROCESS

If there is an emergency that arises while a horse is being ridden, it may be necessary to get the participant off quickly. If there is not enough time to stop and do the participant's usual dismount, then an Emergency Dismount will be necessary. Here are the steps for an Emergency Dismount.

- Sidewalkers/Supporters
  - a. Ensure the participant's feet are clear of the stirrups.
  - b. Wrap your arms around their waist.
  - c. Pull them to your hip.
  - d. Slowly back away from the horse (avoid putting you and the participant directly behind the horse).
- Leaders/Handlers
  - a. Ensure the horse is on-lead.
  - b. Walk the horse away from the participant (avoid putting the participant directly behind the horse).

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- Telephones are located in the main office and inside the barn office. Vet and other important numbers are posted by the phone with directions to the facility.
- Four fire extinguishers are located in the indoor arena, one at each corner. Two extinguishers are located in the main barn next to the North and South roll-up doors.
- Human first aid supplies are located in the cabinets behind the lobby desk and in the designated locker in the barn.
- Horse first aid supplies are found in the main barn vet area.
- Completed Emergency Medical Treatment Release forms for both volunteers and participants are in folders in the file cabinet room.
- All Saddle Up! Instructors and Therapists are CPR/AED, First Aid, and Concussion trained.

**ALL EMERGENCIES OR INJURIES TO PEOPLE OR HORSES MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN AN OCCURRENCE REPORT AND SUBMITTED TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR. A STAFF PERSON FILLS OUT THE REPORT AND WILL NEED INPUT FROM ALL WHO WITNESSED THE EVENT.**

## DISASTER PLANS

### FIRE

- Inform a staff person immediately and call 911 or pull a fire alarm pull station to notify the Fire Department.
- If the fire is small, locate a fire extinguisher and/or water hose and use it to extinguish the fire. If that does not work please evacuate the facility.
- Evacuate the facility at the closest exit to you that is not near the fire.
- Before evacuating, staff and volunteers in the barn need to release horses to the closest pasture, if time allows.
- Once evacuated, everyone needs to go to the grassy area at the back of the parking lot that is located between the parking lot and sensory field. This is a safe zone where staff will do a headcount to ensure everyone is accounted for.
- Do not leave the property until told to do so.
- If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately, evacuate the facility with the participant, and go to the safe zone.
  - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, evacuate the facility, remove all equipment from the horse, release them to the closest pasture, and go to the safe zone.
  - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming. We will reunite you with your child in the safe zone.

### TORNADO

- If we are under a tornado watch, staff will monitor the weather forecast and the weather outside to determine if programs can operate. If programs continue operation they must remain in the indoor arena.
- If we are under a tornado warning all programs must immediately cease and the procedure below is in effect.
  - Take cover in the closest Severe Weather Shelter Area (indicated with a green sign with a tornado on it).
  - If time allows, staff and volunteers in the barn need to release horses to the closest pasture.
  - Do not leave your cover area until told to do so by a staff person.
  - If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
    - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately, get the participants to their family (if time allows), and take cover.
    - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, remove all equipment from the horse, release them to the closest pasture, and take cover.
    - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will reunite you with your child before you take cover, if time allows.



**SEVERE THUNDERSTORM/HEAVY LIGHTENING**

- Depending on the severity of the storm, Saddle Up! staff will determine whether programs will be able to operate. Many times if the horses and participants are not bothered by the storm we are able to operate.
- If programs are not able to operate an indoor/unmounted program will be available, if appropriate, and the procedure below is in effect.
  - Everyone should remain in the facility until the lightening has ceased.
  - Staff and volunteers in the barn can choose to get horses to cover if it is safe and time allows.
  - If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
    - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately and escort them into the front lobby.
    - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, remove all equipment from the horse, put them in a stall, and remain in the facility.
    - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will get them to you
    - Instructor/Therapist will decide if an indoor/unmounted program will be available and appropriate.

**FLOOD**

- Depending on the severity of the flooding, Saddle Up! staff will determine whether programs will be able to operate. Due to the Harpeth River backing up to our property, we have minor flooding in our back fields that does not affect program operations.
- There are local roads that have been known to flood that can affect participants, volunteers, and staff from safely traveling to the farm. If multiple roads are affected by flooding and it is not safe for people to travel to Saddle Up! then programs will be cancelled.
- If programs are in progress during a Flood Warning, staff will monitor local road conditions and determine whether programs will be able to continue.
- Since people travel from many different locations to Saddle Up!, we ask that you follow general safety guidelines for flooding (listed below from [www.ready.gov/floods.com](http://www.ready.gov/floods.com)).
  - Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. Turn Around, Don't Drown!
    - Six inches of moving water can knock you down.
    - One foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
  - Stay off of bridges over fast-moving water.
  - Determine how best to protect yourself based on the type of flooding.
    - Evacuate if told to do so.
    - Move to higher ground or a higher floor.
    - Stay where you are.

**ACTIVE SHOOTER**

- Call 911 immediately and inform a staff person, if possible.
- In the event of an active shooter, there are three recommended actions provided by the Department of Homeland Security: FEMA, and in order, they are...
  - Run – Evacuate the facility at the closest exit to you that is not near the shooter and find somewhere to take cover. Help others evacuate, if possible.
  - Hide – Take cover in an enclosed room and lock it behind you or barricade the door, if possible. Help others hide, if possible.
  - Fight – As a last resort and if your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter.
- Once law enforcement arrive on the scene their immediate purpose is to stop the active shooter. Please remain calm and follow their instructions as they assess the scene.
- Law enforcement will need everyone to stay on site until all questioning has been completed and they have determined that it is safe to leave.
- If this type of emergency occurs during a program please follow these additional guidelines;
  - Sidewalkers/supports – Dismount participants immediately and follow the best course of action based on the recommended actions above for you and the participant to get to safety.
  - Leaders/handlers – Once your participant is dismounted, follow the best course of action based on the recommended actions above to get to safety. If possible, remove all equipment from the horse and release them to the closest pasture.
  - Parents and guardians should not attempt to retrieve their child from programming, we will reunite you with your child as soon as possible.

## Other Ways to Help

As a non-profit, Saddle Up! relies heavily on people giving of their time, money, and talents. If you have the ability to provide additional support to our organization, there is more information below on how you can do that.

### **DONATE**

Your monetary gift will help children experience the physical, emotional, and mental benefits of this special program. Saddle Up! keeps fees low due to the support of generous donors that help fill the gap between program fees and actual costs. If you would like to help support our programs, please visit our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org).

### **VOLUNTEER YOUR SKILL/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (IN KIND)**

Many of our parents/guardians have skills or offer professional services that we aren't aware of. This could include many different career areas such as electricians, landscapers, musicians, technology, marketing, fundraising, public speaking, finance, carpenters, etc. If you have a skill or if your company or business would be willing to donate a professional service that Saddle Up! could benefit from, please let a staff person know.

### **VOLUNTEER WITH A GROUP**

Certain times of the year, Saddle Up! has special projects that need to be completed by large groups. We have many businesses come out for teambuilding and group volunteer projects throughout the year. If you know of a business or group that is interested in volunteering as a group, you can contact our Volunteer Services Director at (615) 794-1150 x230. We will provide on-site training specific to their project.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Saddle Up! holds several special events a year where you can come and enjoy a day or evening of activities, knowing your money is going to a good organization. You can visit our website at [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org) to see our upcoming events.

## TERMINOLOGY

It is essential that accurate terminology/wording be used when describing activities that incorporate horses in order to promote clarity, consistency, and transparency in settings, including marketing, research, and clinical documentation, resulting in improved quality of communication, better consumer protection and expanded professionalism. We have defined some helpful terms below for our families to have a better understanding of the services we provide.

**Adaptive Riding:** Horseback riding lessons for individuals with special needs. Taught by experienced instructors who have received specialized training and are often certified to work with students with disabilities. These instructors adapt their teaching style, the environment and/or equipment to facilitate acquisition of riding skills and participation in an enjoyable activity. Opportunities are available to participate in competitive equestrian events, recreation and leisure, education, socialization, and/or fitness. 'Adaptive Riding' is synonymous with 'Therapeutic Riding'. It is recommended that individuals use the term 'Adaptive Riding' to replace 'Therapeutic Riding' because it is more accurate and is consistent with other activities and sports for individuals with disabilities. 'Therapeutic Riding' is often confused with 'Therapy', whereas 'Adaptive Riding' is easier to distinguish.

**Equine Assisted Therapies (EAT):** An umbrella term used to describe a group of therapies provided by licensed healthcare professionals who include horses and/or equine interactions as a treatment tool/strategy. When referring to therapy including horses, it is advised that therapists specify the professional license that they are working under (i.e. physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, or mental health/psychotherapy) and utilize a term that leads with the professional service being provided. Therapy utilizing the movement of the horse was previously referred to as hippotherapy. Hippotherapy is not a profession nor a separate service. There are no "hippotherapists" nor "equine therapists". If your child(ren) is part of Saddle Up!'s Therapy Services program, you can describe what they participate in by stating they are receiving Physical, Occupational, or Speech therapy services that incorporate the use and manipulation of equine movement as part of the overall treatment plan.

**Mounted Horsemanship:** This term is used to describe activities that are performed when riding on the back of a horse. In mounted horsemanship the participant uses their natural (hand, seat, and leg) and artificial aids (if needed), to influence the movement of the horse. Mounted horsemanship activities include, but are not limited to, upward transitions, downward transitions, use of rein aids, use of leg aids, 2-point position, posting trot, sitting trot, diagonals, mounting, dismounting, and canter leads.

**Unmounted Horsemanship:** This term is used to describe activities that focus on learning more about the horse and their environment from the ground. In unmounted horsemanship the participant does not ride the horse, but can interact with the horse in hand (being led) as well as participate in activities without a horse. Unmounted horsemanship activities include, but are not limited to, horse breeds, horse body language, farm/barn responsibilities, horse health care, grooming, and tacking.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What do we do when we arrive for a lesson?

#### Sidewalkers:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before your assigned time. Review the posted volunteer schedule to verify the instructor, child, and horse you will be with (*note: Child and horse assignments can change at the last minute so it is important to check schedule even if you are a regular sidewalker.*)
- The horse and leader should already be in the cross-tie area. Ask the leader and/or instructor if there is anything that you need to know as the sidewalker for that lesson.
- Wait for instructor to indicate when it is time to go get your student.

#### Leaders:

- Arrive 30 minutes before your assigned time. Review the posted volunteer schedule to verify the horse you will be leading (*note: the horse can change at the last minute so it is important to check the schedule even if you are a regular leader.*)
- Retrieve the groom box and tack needed for the lesson and take to the cross-tie area for that lesson. Retrieve the horse and take to the cross-ties.
- Groom your horse and verify if the child will be tacking or if you need to. If you will be tacking the horse, then tack at this time.
- Wait for instructor, rider, and sidewalker to come out for the lesson.

### How do I find out if Saddle Up! has been cancelled due to weather?

- Communications regarding program cancellations are sent out via Facebook, email, text messages, or phone calls prior to the scheduled program time whenever possible.
- **We DO NOT follow the local school system for program cancellation.** If you are not sure whether Saddle Up! programs are operating due to inclement weather please contact the Lesson Hotline at (615) 794-1150 x290 for more information.