

Tri-State Therapeutic Riding Center



Orientation Manual for New Riders

Welcome to Tri-State Therapeutic Riding Center!

Welcome to our Tri-State barn family! We are excited to get your family involved in the rewarding, powerful, crazy, and exciting world of horses. Along the way you will have a ton of questions and things may oftentimes feel overwhelming but we are always happy to answer any of your questions and hope this guide will as well.

Tri-State is a very special place where anything feels possible. We look forward to hearing your goals and working toward achieving them. Use this guide to get the best out of your experience and we always welcome feedback to make sure we are meeting your needs.

Tri-State Therapeutic Riding Center's Mission is to provide the opportunity for emotional and physical healing, equestrian education, and fulfillment for physically-, mentally-, or emotionally-challenged individuals of all ages. We pride ourselves on our culture of acceptance, providing individuals with appropriate challenges and being goal-oriented.

We serve over 200 individuals annually and hope to reach even more members of the community. It is our dream to give the community a safe, fun, family-oriented place that can help participants reach their goals both on and off horse.

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Hours of Operation

We operate with a flexible schedule around your availability. However, we do not operate outside of the following hours:

Monday-Friday: 9am to 7pm

Saturday: 9am to 2pm

Sunday: Closed

Our instructors are able to make-up and reschedule lessons within business hours and based on their availability and discretion.

Yearly Calendar

We have sessions that account for holidays and shut-downs necessary for staff training and development, special events, and horse vacation. Sessions are 5 weeks each so that billing is easier for those paying by session.

If you are paying by the session, it will be based on the following calendar. Please note that there will be announced closures for minor holidays, weather and special events.

Session 1: January through Mid February

Session 2: Mid February through March

Session 3: April through Mid May

Session 4:-- Mid May- June

Session 5: July through Mid August

Session 6: Mid August through September

Session 7: October through Mid November

Session 8: Mid November through December

Closed through New Years

Cancellation Policy

We understand that things happen- they happen on our end too! However, our instructors are very busy and have to be able to plan travel to Tri-State, horse usage, treatment plans, volunteers and many other factors around your lesson time so it is important that we have as much of a heads-up as possible if you cannot make it. With advance notice, we can reschedule your lesson so it is a win-win for everyone!

1. If you need to cancel for any reason, please give at least 24 hours notice to your instructor without penalty or questions.
2. If it is an emergency- medical or family related, please give as much notice as possible without penalty.
3. **If you are canceling the day of your lesson without a documented emergency, we will unfortunately have to charge for the lesson** as we will have to pay the instructor for their time as noted above.
4. If you cancel without documented reason 3 or more times within a session, we will have to give your lesson slot to someone on our waiting list and can discuss fitting your rider in one of our make-up time slots.

Again, we understand things happen. We are also not excused to the cancellation policy. Our instructors are held to this cancellation policy:

1. Instructors are to give 24 hours heads-up to reschedule a lesson.
2. If an instructor has to cancel last minute, it will be related to one of the reasons on our cancellation policy procedures:
 - a. Horse related emergency. This means the vet is coming out for one of our horses in severe condition. We certainly do not want riders seeing a horse in severe condition. If it is not a severe emergency and a volunteer or another instructor can handle the appointment we will not cancel your lesson.
 - b. Personnel/rider/visitor emergency. This means one of our riders, volunteers or instructors themselves needs immediate medical attention.
 - c. Weather related cancellation (see policy below)
 - d. Special Event at Tri-State Therapeutic Riding Center. These events are generally posted so you would be aware long before the 24 hours prior to the lesson affected. However, instructors, to the best of their memory, should give a reminder 24 hours prior.
 - e. Acute illness/injury of instructor. We do not want your child exposed to the flu or anything contagious.
 - f. Safety concerns- lack of volunteers, questionable horse behavior (they have their days too!), electrical issues, etc.

Your instructor will contact you as soon as there is a concern related to cancelling. When possible, you will be given the option to ride with another instructor if one is available OR to reschedule. If another instructor is not available you will be given the option to reschedule.

If you are concerned with your instructor's cancellations or they become frequent, please call the director and we will resolve the issue.

Weather Policy

Horses are very sensitive to the weather. Although TSTRC is an indoor facility, this is still considered an outdoor sport and we need to do everything possible to keep your child safe.

We cancel during the following weather:

1. Thunder/lightning/heavy rain/high winds. Horses get very nervous in this weather and it is simply not safe to ride until the storm has passed for at least 30 minutes. If a storm pops up during a lesson, riders will be dismounted and separated from the horses for their safety.
2. Winter weather- snow, hail, ice. We do not want people driving in concerning weather.
3. Extreme heat/ Heat index too high. We use the following chart to decide. Our horses are older and often have health issues so generally above 120 we do not ride as they get affected more easily.

Know your HEAT INDEX
Is it Too Hot to Ride?

Ambient Temperature °F + Humidity %
=
Heat Index

< 120 = safe
120 - 150 = Use caution
> 150 = don't ride

The heat index is determined by adding the temperature (in °F) to the % humidity.

● Rule of thumb: If it is below 120, you are riding in safe conditions. Between 120 and 150, use caution. Above 150, don't ride.

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4. Extreme cold- generally if it is close to or below freezing we will not ride as it is miserable for our horses' joints, instructors and the riders themselves.

5. Tornado watches/warnings
6. Flood watches/warnings

Emergency Procedures

Please be aware of the following emergency procedures:

In the case of a fall:

Instructor will give instructions to those around. Someone will be assigned to handle the horse, instructor will attend to the rider and, as needed, instructor will assign someone to call 911. If the fall is not serious and the rider can re-mount, they will do so after the horse has been assessed for safety and given the circumstances. If the rider appears hurt, they will not re-mount and instructor will follow-up on medical treatment given. An incidence report will need to be signed by parents, volunteers and instructor.

In the case of fire:

Volunteers will guide parents, riders, and visitors through the nearest exit and to the campground parking lot (below the barn). Instructor will assign someone to call 911 and volunteers will release the horses without bridles.

In the case of severe weather:

Riders will be dismounted from horses and escorted to the office to be safe. Horses will be released or stalled based on instructor's decision but riders will not assist for safety reasons.

In the case of a threat of violence:

Riders and families will exit through the nearest exit and leave the property, instructor will inform if someone needs to call 911. They will be contacted after the incident to process what happened and ensure everyone is safe.

Thankfully, these incidents are not common at TSTRC, however preparedness is necessary in the case that something was to happen. Take note of all exits while you are at the barn and be aware of the plan.

Barn Rules

The barn is an exciting place to be, but there are so many ways to get hurt or in a sticky situation. Our barn rules are designed to keep everyone safe and the atmosphere relaxed so that our riders and horses can concentrate on their goals and make the most of their time. These rules are not all-encompassing and we ask that you respect what the instructor asks.

1. Cigarette smoking, cigar smoking, vapes and pipe smoking are prohibited anywhere on property.
2. No drug, alcohol or weapon use will be allowed on property. If you are found to be intoxicated or carrying a weapon you will be removed from the property at once.
3. No vulgar language or offensive remarks. We practice inclusion and acceptance and do not discriminate.
4. No verbal, physical or sexual harassment of anyone will be tolerated.
5. Respect confidentiality of all participants in the program: do not discuss who is in the program, take/post photos unless expressed consent is given by their family.
6. NO hitting, biting, hair pulling, or spitting at horses, volunteers, other riders, instructors or visitors.
7. Children under the age of 13 are to be under adult supervision at all times. Children are not allowed to climb on the farm implements or fences. No running, yelling or boisterous play, especially when horses are present.
8. Please clean up after yourself around the barn and in the bathrooms. Food and drink are allowed in the property and in the barn but we ask that you dispose of them appropriately.
9. Please make sure all tack, brushes, saddles etc are picked up and placed back in the respective area. Anything you or your child has moved needs to go back.
10. Drive slowly and please leave designated handicap parking spots to those who need them.
11. Helmets are required by all riders unless medical professional has signed-off and your case has been reviewed.
12. Please do not enter the pastures without permission or assistance of the instructor or a designated volunteer.
13. NO DOGS ALLOWED unless they are service dogs.
14. Please do not feed the horses unless supervised by your instructor.

Help us make the farm a fun, friendly, supportive environment for all! Be nice to others, both people and horses, no exceptions. Treat other riders, staff, volunteers, family, and guests with the same kindness and respect with which you would like to be treated, while on the farm, at shows or clinics and on social media.

Discipline Policy

Our goal is to have a safe, fun time at the barn. Very rarely do we find that someone is not fitting in with our barn family. However, our rules are important and there for a reason and if we believe we cannot keep your rider or our other riders safe, we may have to determine if their continued participation in the program is appropriate.

Our progressive discipline process has six steps of increasing severity. These steps are:

- Verbal warning
- Informal meeting with Instructor
- Formal, written warning
- Formal disciplinary meeting with program director
- Suspension from program for a set time period
- Dismissal from program

Different offenses correspond to different steps in our disciplinary process. For example, minor, one-time offenses (e.g. not cleaning up after oneself) will trigger Step 1. More severe violations (e.g. bringing a weapon) will trigger step 6.

Program Director may skip or repeat steps at their discretion. Our barn may treat circumstances differently from that described in this policy. But, we are always obliged to act fairly and lawfully and document every stage of our progressive discipline process.

Dress Policy

Everyone at the barn needs to dress appropriately for a therapeutic and barn setting.

1. Barns are dirty- please wear something you do not mind getting dirty and possibly staining.
2. Dress for the weather, but those riding need to zip up jackets so they do not get caught on anything.
3. Closed-toed shoes are **REQUIRED**. This can be sneakers but ideally it would be a boot with a small heel. We cannot let people with sandals near the horses as it is a safety risk.
4. We suggest long pants for comfort but they are not a requirement.

We provide helmets!

Special Opportunities

We want our barn family to have access to all opportunities any other riding farm may offer. We encourage you to reach out with any programming ideas you have to help your rider achieve their goals!

Family Sessions- We can do family lessons to work together toward therapeutic goals in the family realm.

Clinics- Occasionally we will offer clinics to teach our riders about things that aren't covered in a typical lesson and let them get hands-on practice. For example, they can observe the vet and/or farrier, learn equine first aid, learn equine massage from our masseuse, watch a horse trainer in action, and much more! These are generally announced on our website, bulletin board and occasionally facebook.

Equestrian Team- Join our team and come show our horses! Learn sportsmanship, teamwork, and determination while showing off your skills.

Parenting group- Support group for our parents to share stories of triumph and tribulations, get advice, empathy and a few hours of respite.

Camps- All-abilities camps which allow riders to be inclusive with others with/without disabilities. Generally 9am-2pm.