



HORSES Health and Safety /welfare notable points for all staff April 2023 (please sign when read)

Reviewed April 2023, Emily Field, site 2 student coordinator.

Everyone to wash hands after handling animals, before eating and when they leave

- Students riding in term time sessions need to be assessed by Clair, Emily, B or Kelly in their first riding session. Rider assessment forms must be completed and filed in the rider assessment folder. After their assessment session, any member of staff signed off to deliver lead-rein riding sessions may deliver future sessions for them. This does not apply to students riding in holidays, unless they wish to ride off lead rein when they should be assessed by one of the people listed above first.
- There will always be a designated experienced horse person onsite for family sessions, playdates, day camps, play schemes, camps, etc.
- No pushchairs in yard area or barn. Must be in closed empty stables or log cabin area, or can be in play paddock when no horses are present.
- No open toed shoes around the horses or for riding
- All staff to be assessed on horse handling/safety skills before working with the horses
- Only 'horse staff' to work with horses (after assessment) except for side walking, grooming and painting ponies, when agreed by designated experienced horse person.
- No clients to go into horse paddocks unless agreed by the designated experienced horse person for agreed activities with agreed horses
- All students to wear riding hats when in paddocks with horses, for poo picking and catching horses
- All students in term time education sessions to wear hats for grooming and leading horses as well as riding (BHS industry standards) unless they have sensory issues and it has been agreed that they don't have to wear them.
- Children and parents in family sessions do not need to wear hats for grooming or leading
- *Ménage gate to be shut at all times when horses are in there – whether they are being ridden or led, because if horses get loose they would be a significant hazard in the yard area.*
- *Stables doors to be kept shut when horses are being groomed, tacked up used for sensory work etc*



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- *All yard and paddock gates to be kept shut at all times so any horses getting loose are quickly contained.*
- Once tacked up, all tack to be checked by designated experienced horse person before mounting
- Some horses can nip people close by or the handler when being girthed up – (Beauty in particular). Girth up carefully and slowly. Monitor and make sure no one is in the vicinity. Praise/reward the horse for standing quietly.
- All fitting of riding hats to be checked by designated experienced horse person before mounting
- Girths to be checked by designated experienced horse person before every mounting
- Use the mounting block to mount wherever possible
- Do not use the mounting block to dismount as this is quite tricky and easy for people to fall off
- Never allow anyone to mount a horse while tied up. Untie all horses whilst doing sensory work.
- Never wrap lead ropes or reins around your hands and check that children and students do not do so. This could cause serious injury if the horse spooks and drags the individual
- Horses only to be tied to specially allocated tie rings with breakable rings/string in agreed areas – NEVER to a SOLID OBJECT especially a wooden fence – if they pull back they can break it and drag it causing blind panic
- Horses to have hay nets and water when tied up in yard or in stables for more than 15 minutes
- Hay nets to be tied with quick release knots and the string should be threaded back through the bottom of the net before tying to ensure the hay net is well off the floor. Only small holed nest to be used at New Leaf Triangle to prevent horses feet getting entangled and causing a panic hazard as well as injury to the horse
- Horses (rather than ponies) to be tied in stables for grooming, tacking up etc wherever possible or on the rubber matted tying area in site 1 play paddock
- Horses to be tied out of kicking distance of each other, unless agreed by designated experienced horse person in the case of some of the ponies
- Horses to be tied up with a short rope so that they cannot get their head all the way to the floor. If they get a rope over their head they can panic and pull back.
- When picking feet out do not let clients face the horses foot, must stand sideways on
- Do not let clients sit down or kneel when grooming or picking feet



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- Do not let clients stand behind the horses in case the horse pulls back from where they are tied. This is more of a hazard than kicking in our situation as kicks are unlikely with our horses
- Do not leave headcollars on in stables or fields as they could get caught on solid objects and cause panic and injury
- When tying in stables ensure that horses cannot reach to put their heads near door catches etc which the headcollars could get caught on and cause panic and injury. This is especially important at Site 2 barn due to large metal bolts on the doors.
- Be aware of other horses when moving horses around the yard, especially those being left behind in the barn, yard or paddock on their own. If they are neighing or agitated action needs to be taken – i.e. horse staff will need to move them out or put another horse in with them to settle them
- Horses should not be fed any other animal's food, especially goat food that can be fatal for other animals
- Horses to be turned back to face the gate before releasing in field or ménage as they could injure someone if they kick out in exuberance once released
- Never introduce new props/equipment close to the horses without checking with designated experienced horse person that the horse is accustomed to it, e.g flags, drums, ball etc
- Always watch the horse's expressions and body language when you are working in their vicinity so that you can pick up if they are worried about anything. If you have concerns, remove children and students from the area and alert horse staff. In the rare event of a horse becoming frightened or upset, the horse may need moving to a safe area such as the main field.
- Be aware if the horse puts his ears flat back and points his nose at someone, he is not happy. He is threatening you/them and if you persist the next stage is to bite. Back off and re consider what you are doing/advise clients to move away or stop what they are doing.
- All horse activities, ridden or on foot, must be agreed with designated horse person e.g entering paddocks, feeding horses, games, using props etc
- **Only completed activities you are agreed for, as per the Horse Activity matrix. Where you are "yellow" for an activity, this needs to be authorised by Lorraine or Troy before you complete the activity, each time you complete it. Just because you have done it before, you still need to check each time.**



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- Only experienced horse staff, specifically trained to carry out back riding can ride with a child
- All back riding to have at least one side walker
- Sensory work should have at least two people supporting, ideally three, one holding the horses and at least one supporting the person. Horses should be held and not tied up
- All children and students new to riding to have at least one side walker
- If a child needs holding for stability they must have a side walker. One person should not lead and hold a child's for stability at the same time
- If I any doubt about anything don't take risks. Always think about whether you could evidence you have taken all reasonable safety precautions before doing any activity and that the horse/pony is accustomed to and safe with the activity
- Use your own judgement and don't be persuaded by children and parents to do things you don't think are safe, the child is not ready for or the horse is not safe with
- Don't push anyone to do more that they feel happy to do
- Remember we are not a riding school and the horses and ponies are not riding school horses. We have picked them for their safety and ability to cope with a wide range of situations/ environments/ noises and people. Most are elderly and should not be used for hard work such as excessive cantering and jumping. They are not riding school zombie horses who have gone into 'shut down' mode – they all have their own characters and opinions. When they have had enough for one day, they will tell you in their own ways and we respect that. They work very hard and are team members rather than resources! Give them praise, scratches, rubs and treats through the day and encourage clients to do the same.

Lorraine, Troy and Carly

Please sign when you have read and understood the points above :

Signature	name	date



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