



Mobility to the spirit
within!



POLICY MANUAL

Safety is the primary concern for everyone involved with Heads Up! Anyone who becomes involved with horses must understand their basic nature and instincts. As creatures of prey, horses have evolved in a manner of self preservation. They have developed senses and instincts which are very different, which is to ensure self preservation. They have developed senses and instincts which are different from our own. Their senses of hearing, vision, smell and touch are very acute. Horses have a very large field of vision, although their eye sight is relatively poor. However, they are superiors to humans in their ability to detect movement and remember the location of objects. Horses are creatures of flight when they sense danger. As a result, they usually react by bolting when frightened or lashing out with their hind feet when they feel trapped. The combination of these unique characteristics produces an animal that is very sensitive to sudden movement and noise, choosing to bolt as a primary response in extreme situations. Bolting, kicking and biting are examples of behaviors which have the potential to be very dangerous when a horse is being ridden or handled. Because horses are such large and powerful animals, they have the potential to cause serious injury and even death. The horses used in this program are considered to be very safe and are accustomed to a lesson atmosphere, being very well suited to our purposes. However, it must be remembered that no horse is a safe horse when it is frightened or agitated. Serious injuries and fatalities do occur as a result of accidents involving horses. Most accidents are very preventable when common sense is used. For this reason this POLICY MANUAL has been compiled to make everyone aware of activities and actions that are considered to be unsafe and are prohibited on the Heads Up! premises. Heads Up! cannot assume full responsibility for the safety and well being of riders, volunteers or other individuals present during our operations. In order to make every effort to ensure your safety and the safety of others, we require you to read and abide by the following policies.



A. RIDERS

1. All prospective riders must submit a completed application packet, including medical form signed by a physician, before an evaluation ride can be scheduled. The purpose of the evaluation ride is to determine if the program can meet the needs of the applicant. Participants in the evaluation ride, as applicable, will be the instructor, physical therapist, special education consultant, leader and sidewalkers. If the evaluation team determines that the program is appropriate for the applicant, an individualized equine plan (IEP) will be developed.
2. All riders must wear an ASTM-approved helmet that fits properly. Heads Up! can provide helmets of all sizes. All riders needing sidewalkers must wear a safety belt, the type to be decided on an individual basis by the team..
3. Each rider may have at least a leader. Each client receiving hippotherapy will have a leader and at least one sidewalker. For safety reasons, two sidewalkers are most frequently utilized.
4. All arena gates are to be closed when a lesson or treatment is in progress.
5. Only individuals directly involved in the lesson should be in the arena during a lesson or treatment.
6. All riders using saddles must use safety stirrups or wear shoes with heels appropriate for riding.
7. Heads Up! reserves the right to end a lesson prematurely if for any reason the instructional environment becomes unsafe or the team determines the rider is behaving inappropriately.
8. All release and medical forms must remain current, signed and dated by a parent/legal guardian and physician within the past year.
9. The usual program consists of 18-22 lessons or treatments per semester. Payment is due in advance. Heads Up! requires a minimum of 24 hours notice of cancellation of your ride. Refunds may be issued of the remaining lessons of a semester are canceled with sufficient notice. Due to the tremendous effort to schedule volunteers, we ask that all riders honor the 18-22 week commitment.
10. We encourage all riders to wear long pants and shoes with heels (only needed if using stirrups).

B. EMERGENCIES

1. In the event of an emergency, the published Emergency Action Plan must be followed. A copy of the Emergency Action Plan is reproduced in this manual.
2. All medical and release forms for current riders are maintained in the beige metal file cabinet under the desk in the office. The Volunteer notebook is the first 3-ring binder on your right as you face the top shelf of the metal shelving unit in the office. All medical and release forms are housed there.
3. A first aid kit is located in the cabinet marked with a red cross. Prior to each session, the kit is rechecked for appropriate contents and expiration dates.
4. A fire extinguisher is located in the wooden cabinet in the parking lot.
5. A mobile phone will be available in the arena at all times. Directions to Heads Up are listed on the form that is taped to the inside of the gray plastic cabinet just outside the arena.
6. In case of fire, evacuation should take place through the nearest gate. Everyone is to meet at well house.

7. Evacuation necessitated by weather conditions or natural disaster will be directed by the instructor or therapist in charge at the time. All riding will cease for 30 minutes following thunder.

C. FACILITIES

1. Profanity, alcohol, firearms and any illegal activities are prohibited on the premises.
2. A restroom and water are located in the office.
3. All paddocks, arenas, stalls, and pastures are off limits to students and guests of Heads Up! without appropriately trained personnel.
4. Smoking is not allowed on the property. Shavings, hay, dry grass, and dust are very combustible. If you must smoke, you may do so within your vehicle, disposing of all butts and ashes in a container within your vehicle.
5. All gates are to remain shut and latched at all times, including the backyard gates as one of the dogs will run away!

D. HORSES

1. Unless you are a volunteer involved with grooming and tacking horses, please remain well away from areas where horses are being handled. Please understand that hooves and teeth can come under, over and through the fence/bars.
2. Do not attempt to entice the horses to run. Horses are easily startled and can bolt. When excited they can slip and fall, crash into a fence, or become agitated with each other enough to kick or bite.
3. Please do not feed the horses. Potentially bites can occur. The horses receive an excellent diet and not all plants/food may be safe for them.

E. VOLUNTEERS

1. All release forms must be current, signed and dated within the past year.
2. All volunteers assisting riders must be properly trained. Training includes being familiar with the *Volunteer Training Manual*, this policy manual and participation in an individual or group training sessions. Training sessions will include a review of all program safety policies, familiarization with the facility and supervised practice in emergency dismount procedures. Information about disabilities will be presented as needed. Following the training session, the instructor will determine the appropriateness of the prospective volunteer for leader/sidewalker duties. The instructor will notify the volunteer coordinator that the applicant is certified eligible to be scheduled for a semester. In addition, there are emergency drills during each semester.
3. All volunteers are responsible for upholding the policies of the program as stated in this manual. We ask that safety be a primary concern and that everyone stay alert and responsive.
4. Volunteers are expected to make a commitment for the entire session. If a volunteer is unable to attend a session, each volunteer is to find a substitute (see telephone list). In an emergency, the volunteer coordinator can be contacted.
5. Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age to be a sidewalker or leader unless given written permission by the equine and program directors.
6. Any volunteer serving as a leader during a session must be an experienced horse person.

7. Volunteers serving as sidewalkers must be suitably matched in size to the rider and horse.

8. Everyone volunteering during sessions must be wearing proper footwear. We prefer boots be worn. Sandals and flip-flops are never permitted. It is suggested that volunteers wear shoes or boots that offer foot protection. Dangling jewelry may be unsafe to wear with some participants. Perfumes can attract bees and other biting insects. Loose, floppy clothing present a hazard to all. Restrictive clothing can impede movement. Suggestive clothing can be distracting to others.

9. Sunblock and/or other appropriate protection from the elements is recommended.

F. VEHICLES

Parking is not permitted directly in front of the second gate (the large 16-foot gate) so that it is clear for emergency vehicle access. A parking area is provided beside the arena. When this is full, the truck and trailer turn-around can be used. If this is full, parallel parking along the right side of the drive is possible as long as the drive is not blocked.

G. CHILDREN

1. All children must be closely supervised by an adult. All policies outlined in this manual pertain to children as well as adults.

2. Equipment, gates, fences, hay, shavings, etc . . . are not to be climbed on or played with.

3. Please refrain from walking along the sides of the riding arena. The sudden appearance of people, animals and objects may startle horses involved in lessons. Startled horses can act unpredictably, potentially a cause of accidents.

4. Heads Up! requests that loud noise and sudden movements be kept to a minimum, particularly near the barn or arena.

H. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All information pertaining to riders and volunteers participating in Heads Up! is considered confidential.

2. Release of information pertaining to program participants can only be made with written consent of the individual or their legal guardian.

3. Individual files containing emergency and programming information are maintained in the black metal filing cabinet located under the built-in desk.

“WARNING”

Under North Carolina Law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting exclusively from the inherent risks of equine activities.

- Chapter 99E of the North Carolina General statutes.

