



2025 Participant Handbook

Equestrian Programming

(for parent or guardian)



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 the EquiCenter! The purpose of this handbook is to share our policies and procedures. Our current class schedule, contact numbers, attire requirements, and general rules are included.

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.

There are many opportunities for you to become involved in our program. Being a not-for-profit organization, you can help support us by volunteering in areas such as facilities, administration, special events, operational needs, and our lesson program. Please contact Debi Houliares, our Volunteer Director, to see how you can get involved.

EquiCenter Contact Information

Barn Phone = 585-624-7777 Fax = 585-684-7863 General Email = Info@equicenterny.org

Senior Director of Programming

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

Senior Director of Operations

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PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors

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PATH Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning

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Phil Wytrwa; PWytrwa@equicenterny.org

Michael Murphy: MMurphy@equicenterny.org

PATH Equine Assisted Learning

Betsy Whitehouse: BWhitehouse@equicenterny.org

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

Cancellation Policy

We are unable to give credits for missed lessons except those listed below. Your lesson slot is yours for the duration of the session and given no rider is alike (i.e., requiring a particular horse, instructor, volunteer support, etc.) we cannot offer your missed lesson slot to any other participant. Although we are not able to offer credits for common illnesses, as a courtesy to our staff and volunteers, who are attempting to remain healthy in this season, we ask that the participant stay home when they are exhibiting symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea. Please make sure to call the barn phone (585-624-7777) ASAP if you need to cancel so we can give the volunteers and staff advanced notice of your absence.

- 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 calls” or “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 given for the following reasons.

We do provide credits for the following absences:

- **Medical Credit** = Missed lesson for a major medical absence such as anything requiring medical attention or a doctor’s visit.
- **Scheduled Credit** = An absence that was communicated before the start of the session. We can take off the volunteers and arrange the staff and horse’s schedule when we are made aware of an absence before the start of the session. We allow up to one scheduled credit per session.
- **Weather Credit** = If EquiCenter cancels your lesson due to weather conditions or if the driving conditions in your area are declared a “warning” by the weather channel then we will issue you a credit.
 - If one or more local schools (i.e. Pittsford-Mendon, HF-L, Victor) are closed due to weather, lessons may also be canceled. If the weather is borderline contact us at 585-624-7777.
 - Adaptive 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.
- **EquiCenter or Instructor Credit** = Anytime EquiCenter cancels your lesson.

****Please note that lesson credits must be used within one year of issuance****

Key notes for billing:

- Please inform us of any changes: email address, phone number etc.
- If you know you'll be going on self-direction please let us know or if there are changes such as agency, FI, etc.

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 above), 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.

Registration

- A one-time \$35 orientation fee will be collected at your evaluation.
- Due to PATH regulations, we must receive complete registration forms annually. This includes the physician's statement.
- All paperwork must be complete and all payments must be made before any student being considered officially registered.
- Continuing registration forms are due 1 month 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.

Fees

We take pride in the care we provide to our herd of 34+ horses. Maintaining this high standard of care comes at a cost of 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.

Adaptive Riding *(we are not able to accommodate all selections every session)*

- Group 1 Hour: \$59 per lesson
- Semi-Private 1-hour: \$70 per lesson
- Semi-Private 45 minute: \$64 per lesson
- Private 1 hour: \$91 per lesson
- Private 45 minute: \$80 per lesson
- Private 30 minute: \$70 per lesson

Unmounted Horsemanship

- Semi-Private 1 hour: \$52 per lesson
- Semi-Private 45 minute: \$46 per lesson
- Semi-Private 30 minute: \$41 per lesson
- Private 1 hour: \$72 per lesson
- Private 45 minute: \$62 per lesson
- Private 30 minute: \$52 per lesson

We encourage those who are in financial need to reach out for a scholarship application. EquiCenter will do its best to accommodate as many requests as possible.

Attire

- All students will wear approved ASTM safety helmets while mounted or when working around the horses. We have a selection available for you to borrow while riding or you may purchase your own at any local CountryMax store or online at www.doversaddlery.com or www.statelinetack.com. Helmets must be purchased within 5 years due to PATH regulations.
- Wear appropriate closed-toe shoes. Boots with a low heel and smooth sole are recommended for all students who use stirrups.
- Long pants are required. Stretch pants or breeches are most comfortable.
- In cold weather, wear layers and make sure the student has gloves that will enable them to grip the reins. If the rider does not utilize reins, mittens are appropriate.
- In hot weather wear "breathable" clothing to avoid overheating. Sunscreen and a cold drink are encouraged!

Safety Rules

- Do not leave children unattended.
- While students are mounted a parent or guardian must remain on site for the entire lesson. The only exception is if the student is over 18 years old and they are their own legal guardian (please notify the instructor of this prior to beginning lessons).
- Do not allow children to run or play loudly. Keep children off the mounting ramp.
- Please leave the viewing area in an orderly manner. If toys are used please put them away.
- Do not visit the horses without permission and supervision.
- No hand-feeding horses.
- EquiCenter is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is only permitted in your personal vehicle in the big parking lot. Take all butts with you - no littering.
- Your family members and friends are encouraged to visit. When lessons are in progress or horses are out, all visitors must remain in the designated spectator area.
- We encourage you to take photographs of your rider; however, it is always best to ask staff permission prior to using a flash. Also, make sure the volunteers are ok with their picture being taken.
- No pets are allowed on the property.
- Park in designated areas
- Abide by the speed limit (10 mph). Our lessons and exercise riders frequently go on trail rides and fast-moving vehicles are a safety hazard to both horses and humans.

Weight Policy for Adaptive Riding

Each horse has a set weight limit that they can carry which is based upon their size, age, confirmation, and health history. To keep our horses comfortable and continuing to thrive, we have implemented a pre-session weigh-in.

We will ask you to weigh in by the registration deadline of each session if you intend to sign up for the next session. This will help us to make the appropriate horse pairings for the upcoming session and create a schedule that balances out the horse's workload to the best of our ability.

We appreciate 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 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.

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

Volunteers

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

2025 Session Schedule

Session 1 2025

13 week session January 6th -April 13th 2025

Mid session break week February 17th - February 23rd (No lessons)

Break week April 14- April 20th (No lessons)

Session 2 2025

9 week session April 21st-June 29th

Mid session break week May 26th -June 1st (No lessons)

Break week June 30th - July 6th (No lessons)

Session 3 2025

8 Week Session July 7th - August 31

Break week September 1st- September 7th (No lessons)

Session 4 2025

14 week session September 8th - December 21st

Mid session Break week November 24th - November 30th (No lessons)