



PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

6105 125th AVENUE
MIAMI, FL 33183
WWW.WHISPERINGMANES.ORG

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Dear Participants, Parents, and Caregivers,

Welcome to Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center! We are happy that you have chosen to come experience the joy and pleasure of being with horses at our farm. The following is a handbook for you so that we may share our policies and procedures, and hopefully make your therapeutic horseback riding experience a wonderful one. Carefully review all the information that is enclosed, and please feel free to ask a staff member if you have any questions.

In the event that we need to update any of the information provided here, you will be notified by email, but we will also continually update our website, whisperingmanes.org.

We look forward to having you ride with us!

Erin Bauer, DVM
Executive Director

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE

All classes are scheduled by the Program Director. In the event that you cannot attend a scheduled lesson, please call the Program Director or Instructor as soon as possible. Please be sure to leave a message. Lessons canceled with less than 24 hours notice, not due to illness are not subject to the make up policy. Lesson make ups will not be scheduled for no-shows.

Repeated cancellations, not due to illness, with less than 24-hour notice may result in dismissal from the program.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If inclement weather develops or it is necessary for WMTRC to cancel classes for any reason, WMTRC will call individual riders. For the safety of all participants lessons cannot be conducted in thunderstorms.

If the participant successfully completes 20 minutes of the scheduled session before being dismounted due to inclement weather, the session will not be rescheduled. The remainder of the lesson will be concluded as an un-mounted lesson.

MAKE UP POLICY

Make up classes will be held at the discretion of the Program Director. Lesson make ups will not be scheduled for no-shows. Unless the lesson is cancelled by WMTRC due to inclement weather, the maximum number of allowable make ups per session is two lessons. Each 8 or 10 week session, concludes with two weeks available for make up lessons. Make up lessons will be scheduled on the same day of the week and time as the regular lesson.

Lessons that are not completed within the make up period will be forfeited. Lessons will not be carried over into the following session.

ARRIVAL TIME

All riders are asked to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the start of lesson time. If the rider is more than 15 minutes late for the start of lesson they may not be able to ride, and the lesson may not be rescheduled.

ATTIRE

For the safety of our participants, it is imperative that riders come dressed appropriately. Appropriate attire includes long pants, and closed toed, heeled shoes. ASTM/SEI helmets must be worn at all times when participants are working with or riding the horses. Helmets will be provided by WMTRC and will fitted for each participant when they arrive. Riders must have the chin strap secured when the helmet is on. Our staff will be happy to demonstrate how to properly fit a helmet.

TUITION AND PAYMENT

The seasonal sessions run in 8 or 10-week blocks. The tuition for each one-hour group session is \$50, or \$400 or \$500 for the whole block. The tuition can be paid by check or credit card at the farm, or by PayPal on our website, www.whisperingmanes.org. Private lessons are 30 minutes in length and can be arranged at a cost of \$40 each. Variations on the length of the session or the amount of time per lesson may be made in advance on an individual basis with the Program Director and Executive Director.

REFUND POLICY

Tuition is non-refundable once the session has started. No refund or credits will apply for missed lessons except as follows:

- In the event that a participant takes a medical leave, credit will be given for the remaining lessons, and the lessons can be completed in the next session. A physician letter will be required to receive a medical leave and an updated physician statement will be required before starting the next session.
- In the event that a participant develops a contraindication such as seizures and must cancel once the session has started, only cancellations accompanied by a physician statement will receive pro-rated refunds less \$25 handling fee.
- In the event that a participant must cancel in advance of beginning the session, please notify the Program Director or Executive Director immediately and a full refund will be given.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Every participant in the program, whether in mounted or un-mounted sessions, must complete all program forms. The forms are available from a staff member and on our website. The forms must be completed in full, signed, and dated by the responsible person.

TO BE SIGNED BY APPLICANT (if over 18), PARENT/ GUARDIAN/ CAREGIVER:

APPLICATION
WAIVER OF LIABILITY
CONSENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT
MEDICAL HISTORY RELEASE
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

TO BE SIGNED BY PHYSICIAN:

MEDICAL HISTORY/ PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN EAA

PARTICIPANT RECORDS

Participants are required to update their paperwork annually. Participants will not be allowed to ride if their paperwork is not updated. Participants with Down Syndrome will need negative head and neck radiographs within 7 years, and an annual statement from their physician stating that there are no neurological changes.

SUPERVISION

Participants who are not legally responsible for themselves must remain accompanied by a parent, guardian or caretaker until the participant has been greeted and invited to begin the session with their staff member or volunteer. Do not leave children, whether participants or siblings, unattended as the barn and farm are full of potential dangers to those who are not aware. Parents and guardians must stay on the premises during the entire session.

VISITORS

We welcome all visitors who wish to watch a session, but we ask that visitors be mindful of our policies and safety rules, including the attached Barn Safety Rules, for everyone's safety. We have shaded, seating areas where family and visitors are welcome to watch the lessons. Please be mindful of the session that is under way so as not to distract riders, instructors, or horses. All cell phones should either be turned off or in silent mode so as not to startle the riders or horses, or disrupt the sessions.

If you choose to walk through our barn, do not put your hands into the stalls to pet the horses, and do not feed them. Either action can cause injury to the visitor or the horses, or may cause the horses to develop bad behaviors. All visitors are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Visitors who engage in any form of harassment, aggressive, or abusive behavior toward themselves or others, including the horses, will be requested to leave the premises immediately.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY & PHYSICAL RESTRICTIONS

We would love for everyone to be able to ride and experience the healing and strengthening abilities of a horse. However, for the safety of all individuals, any physician's recommendation that the person not participate in EAA is the final decision.

Prior to starting in the program, an instructor will evaluate the participant to assure that they can participate safely and meaningfully. There are some people for whom therapeutic horseback riding may not be appropriate based on physical, behavioral, or other limitations. We do not have a program for children under 4 years of age, regardless of disability.

For the safety of our participants, volunteers, and horses, we have a 200 lb weight maximum for riding.

It is the responsibility of the participant or the participant's legal guardian to inform a Whispering Manes staff member of any changes in the participant's physical, mental or behavioral status during the time they are enrolled in the program.

Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center has the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the participant's safety, the safety of the horses, volunteers, or staff members.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center accepts participants and volunteers without regard for race, color, religion, gender, income, nationality or ethnic background.

FLORIDA EQUINE LIABILITY LAW

Under Florida 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 from the inherent risks of equine activities. Fla. Stat. §773.04.

**WHISPERING MANES THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER
BARN SAFETY RULES**

1. Always listen and follow WMTRC staff member directions.
2. Respect all persons, animals, and property.
3. Abusive, threatening, or violent behavior or language is NOT allowed.
4. Absolutely no smoking or open flames allowed on the premises.
5. No alcohol or illegal drugs allowed on the premises.
6. Absolutely no teasing, taunting, or harassing of the horses.
7. Never walk behind a horse.
8. ONLY WMTRC staff members are allowed into the stalls.
9. Children must be supervised at all times.
10. No running or loud noises allowed in the barn or around the horses.
11. WMTRC staff member must be present in order to handle the horses.
12. ONLY WMTRC staff members are allowed into the paddocks.
13. All riders must be supervised by a PATH certified instructor.
14. All required forms must be current and on file in the WMTRC office.
15. All riders must wear an ASTM certified helmet in order to participate.
16. All riders must wear appropriate attire (see handbook).
17. Do not feed the horses.
18. Approach all horses quietly and calmly from the front side.
19. The barn aisle must be kept clean and free of obstructions.
20. No pets are allowed in the barn and should not be brought to the farm.
21. Cell phones should either be turned off or silenced so as not to startle the horses or riders.
22. Report all accidents, injuries, or hazardous conditions to a WMTRC staff member.