



# Participant Handbook

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# Introduction to Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center

The mission of Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center is to provide Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies to individuals with mental, physical, emotional, social and sensory disabilities. Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center was founded in 1995 as a non-profit organization dedicated to providing therapeutic riding for the handicapped. Since then, the organization has grown from serving a small group of thirty-five riders with four horses to serving more than one hundred and twenty five students per week between our Therapeutic Riding and Equine Facilitated Learning programs. The organization now houses twenty therapeutic equine partners.

The center is located on the grounds of the historic Frank Black Estate in Mansfield, Ohio. The facilities include an outdoor riding arena, an indoor riding arena with a heated viewing room, a small indoor climate-controlled riding arena, ADA accessible grooming/tack barn, ADA restrooms, two stall barns and ample pastures. Programs are offered year round.

# Programs

## **Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL)**

EFL classes are a 45-60 minutes, non-mounted, educational approach that incorporates equine facilitated activities using the experience of equine/human interaction in an environment of learning and self-discovery in a group environment. This unique learning model allows participants to work in a positive, non-judgmental environment to achieve positive results. Using the horses as partners, this program is designed to promote team work, leadership, coping and problem solving skills. It teaches a student to act, react and interact with their environment appropriately. These are skills that are needed in every day life.

## **Therapeutic Riding**

Horses move four dimensionally. These movements are transferred up from the horse to the rider's pelvis and core system. Strengthening core muscles provide stability in balance, improves breathability, articulation and ambulation. The partnership with an equine will also promote confidence and independence.

Classes are 30-60 minutes includes mounting, warm-up time, skill development, mounted activities and dismount. Group lessons will have up to 4 riders. See eligibility for more information.

# Policies and Procedures

## Eligibility

EFL (Equine Facilitated Learning): Open to all individuals ages 7 through adult with mental, physical, emotional, social and sensory disabilities. No medical clearance is needed to participate in this program.

Therapeutic Riding: Open to individuals with a confirmed medical diagnosis ages 2½ through adult, a maximum weight limit of 185 pounds and can be effectively supported by side walkers. The staff assesses participants based on their professional knowledge and experience, safety and capacities of volunteers, horse suitability and availability, program standards and disability of rider.

## Riding Participation Criteria

- Confirmed medical diagnosis
- Weight less than 185 pounds
- Must have signed physician statement clearing student of any precaution or contraindications
- Completed registration packet and intake assessment.
- Students with Down Syndrome MUST have a yearly X-ray for atlantoaxial instability. No exceptions.

## Student Assessment Criteria

Instructors will evaluate student prior to riding:

- Tolerance for safety riding helmet
- Physical ability to sit on horse
- Ability to mount and dismount horse
- Student's level of comfort sitting astride the horse
- Anxiety of rider
- Tolerance for "new" people
- Ability to behave in a manner that is safe for self, horses and others.

These criteria will not disqualify a rider unless there is a potential risk of harm to the student, sidewalkers, horses or instructor. These criteria will assist the instructor to determine the most suitable horse, any and all adaptation of tack, the amount of physical support the student will require and the appropriate staff or volunteers that will need to be present. It is our goal to allow students to benefit from riding and we will make every effort to accommodate the student's individual needs.

## **Confidentiality**

Participant's diagnosis, medical history and all other related information is used by instructors to develop lesson plans. Only general information relating to the success of the participant is shared with the volunteers on a need to know basis.

## **Scheduling**

Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center offers 4 sessions per year. EFL classes are held year round as we have a climate controlled arena. Winter session is typically 6 weeks long and spring and fall session are 10 weeks. Therapeutic riding is available spring and fall session. Sessions are 10 weeks long and range from 30-60 minutes depending on the individual's needs. Summer camps are available during the summer session.

Classes are held the same day and time each week for the length of each session. Classes are grouped by age and similar riding goals/skills. Participants will be notified when registration and scheduling begins. It will be first come first serve.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Raemelon Therapeutic Equestrian Center strives to make every effort for our services accessible to as many participants as possible.

Tuition is \$32.50 per class. We encourage participants to check with a number of community resources that may help with program cost.

There a limited number of scholarships available each session for those with financial hardship. A financial aid packet, along with a W-2, must be turned in a month before session starts and must be updated every year. The financial aid committee awards scholarship dollars based on the amount of available dollars and level of financial need.

The tuition is to be paid before the session starts unless a pre-arranged payment plan been established with the office. We will work with all students' families so that no one is turned away due to an inability to pay for services. Payments can be made by cash, check or through PayPal.

## **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers are encouraged to observe classes.

We have a heated view room in our main arena and a small viewing area in our EFL arena. We ask that parents/guardians do not get involved during class as the participant has better attentiveness and focus. Our trained instructors will ask parents/guardians for their help if needed. There are occasions where the ratio of students to volunteers is not met. In the event the class is short on volunteer



help, the instructor might ask for the parent/guardian to help sidewalk with a rider. If the instructor is unable to safely conduct a riding class due lack of volunteers, the instructor has the right to cancel class or change the class to a non-mounted lesson.

### **Dress Code**

All students participating in Therapeutic Riding must wear an ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet. Located in the groom barn are helmets riders can use for their class. Pony tails and other styles must be lowered to the base of the neck for the helmet to fit effectively. Refrain from wearing dangling or large jewelry.

Appropriate footwear for all equine activities is mandatory. An ankle high boot with a small heel no greater than an inch is preferred. All footwear must be closed toed and no sandals, flip flops or crocs are permitted. No exceptions.

Stretch pants, snow pants, satiny leggings, shorts and other forms of loose fitting material are not recommended for riding. Jeans and breeches/jodhpurs are best to prevent chafing, pinching and sliding while riding. During hot weather shorts are permitted but be mindful there can be chafing on the legs from the saddle.

Dress appropriate for the weather. Gloves and jackets should be worn on cold days. Hats may be worn as long as they do not compromise the fit of the riding helmet.

### **Closing and Cancellation**

Classes may be cancelled due to tornado or severe thunderstorm alert, thunder, hazardous driving conditions, temperatures above 95 degrees or below 20 degrees, power outage or any other reasons that may cause unsafe conditions.

In the event of a cancellation or closure, we will make every effort to notify participants at least 2 hours in advance. If there is any doubt, please call the office at 419-756-0040.

### **Barn Rules and Guidelines**

- Speed limit on the property is 5 mph to ensure safety of horses, children and others that walk along the driveway.
- The main parking area is located across from our main arena. There is limited parking available in front of the barns. Please do not block the entrances to any buildings and barns.
- No alcohol, weapons or smoking.
- No pets are allowed on the grounds or in vehicles.
- All minors and dependents must be supervised at all times. Please walk them to the location they are going to. If headed to class, drop them off to their instructor.

- Riding participants should stop by the groom barn first to pick up their helmet then come into the arena.
- Closed toed shoes are required when walking or working around a horse.
- No yelling, running or other actions on property that might frighten a horse.
- Do not approach, pet or reach through a fence or stall without permission and supervision of a staff member.
- Do not feed the horses.
- All visitors must be escorted by staff when visiting the property. If a participant is here when it is not normal class time, you must check in with staff.
- Spectators please refrain from making loud noises, loud talking and other actions that could be a distraction for participants while during class.
- No swearing/cursing, inappropriate discussion or behavior.

### **Code of Conduct and Grounds for Dismissal**

All persons at Raemelon Therapeutic Equestrian Center are expected to adhere to the following:

- Respect yourself, all persons, animals and property
- Refrain from all noises, actions and behaviors that may startle a horse.

Failure to adhere to the code of conduct and all policies set forth by this handbook are grounds for dismissal from the program.

# Attendance

## Illness

Participants with the following are not permitted to participate in class:

- Severe cold
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Fever
- Contagious or exposed skin rash.
- Student did not attend school due to illness.
- A communicable disease such as head lice, strep throat, chickenpox, pinkeye, etc.

## Cancellation

Regular attendance is necessary for the benefit and progress of each participant. We understand there will be times when a participant is unable to attend their class. Advanced notice of an absence is very important to ensure proper care of the horse and use of volunteer's time. Please contact the office as soon as possible. For a planned absence, we will make every effort to place that rider into another spot for a make-up class. Make-up classes are not guaranteed.

If a cancellation is needed the day of class, please call the office **and** call or text the instructor. If a participant is a no call no show for 3 classes, the participant will be dismissed from the session.

## **Tardiness**

For EFL classes, plan to arrive 5 minutes prior to start time.

For Therapeutic Riding, plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to start time to allow time to use the restroom, put on helmet, etc.

If a rider has not arrived or not ready to ride 15 minutes past class start time, the horse will be untacked and returned to the barn.

## **Announcement Boards**

Located in the EFL arena and the groom barn are our announcement boards. Please be sure to check them every time you are here as they contain important information such as break weeks, when scheduling opens up for sessions, etc.

## **Parking**

Our main parking lot is located opposite from the main riding arena. Additional limited parking is located in front of the barns. When parking in front of the barns, please do not block entrance to barns.

# Visitors

Visitors are always welcomed during class hours in the observation areas of the facility. Children must be supervised at all times. If visitors would like a tour or more information about Raemelon Therapeutic Equestrian Center, please contact the office to schedule an appointment.

# Volunteer Program

Volunteers are a vital part of our programs. Without volunteers, our programs could not expand to include a greater number of students. Volunteers must be at least 14 years old. All volunteers over 18 years old are subject to a background check. You do not need previous horse experience to volunteer! We will provide training.

Volunteer opportunities for class are horse leader and side walker. Volunteer opportunities for barn volunteers include sweeping, stall cleaning, empty/refill water buckets, moving and stacking hay, etc.