

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Updated January, 2024



Our Mission:

Assisting individuals to develop their highest potential through therapeutically based equine activities.



Welcome to Lothlorien!

Thank you for joining our family of amazing participants, horses, volunteers and staff.
15 Reiter Road, East Aurora, NY 14052 • Phone: 716-655-1335 • Fax: 716-655-2972
www.lothlorientrc.com

Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



Rider Checklist

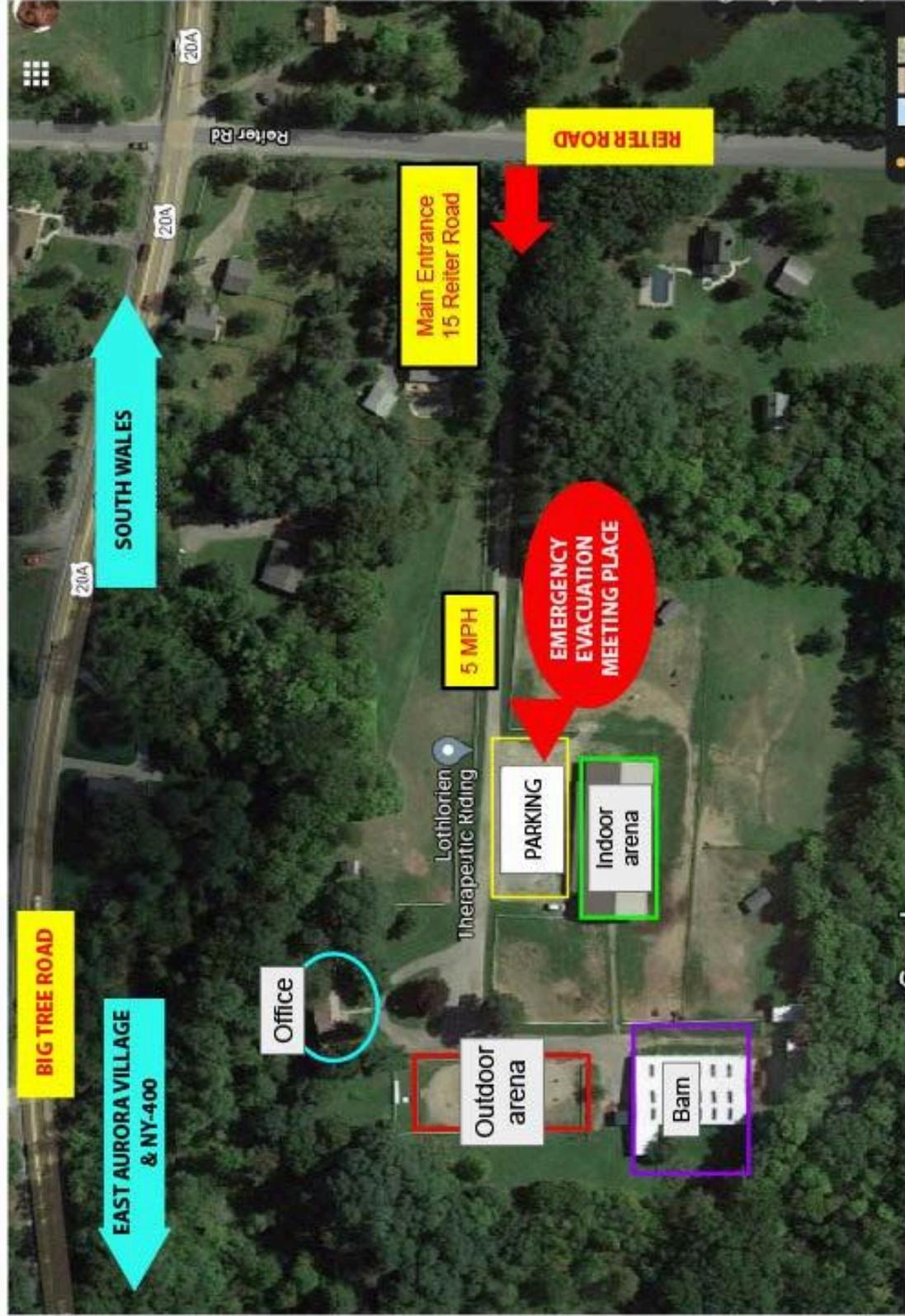
Prior to Arrival: If you are sick, stay home!
Contact the rider hotline at (716) 339-7976

- I have completed the Registration Packet and Welcome Packet
- Rider is wearing long pants, close toed shoes and appropriately warm/cool clothing for the season.
- I am dressed appropriately (with close toed shoes) to sidewalk as necessary.
- Rider has their own water bottle.
- Arrive 10 minutes before the lesson starts.
- Park in front of the Angel Arena. Speed limit is 5mph.
- Meet your instructor in the arena to get a helmet and wait for others to arrive.



Call the Rider Hotline at (716) 339-7976 if you are not coming, running late, have questions etc. If we know you aren't coming or are running late, staff and volunteers can plan accordingly. If you do not notify us, your horse will be put back in its stall after 15 minutes. No make up will be provided (see make up policy).

FACILITY MAP



RIDER HOTLINE: 716-655-1335 OR 716-339-7976

Call number above for any reason, but especially for the following circumstances:

- **If the rider will be absent from their scheduled lesson.** This is in consideration for our instructors and especially our volunteers who give hours of their time to the program.
If a rider cancels, we can let the volunteers know and they can make other plans.
No makeup/credit provided for lessons missed by riders.
- **If you are running late.** Participants who arrive 15 minutes after the start of the lesson (without a notification attempt) WILL NOT be allowed to participate in their scheduled mounted lesson. Upon late arrival, the instructor may offer an alternative ground activity (no riding) at their discretion.
No makeup/credit provided for late arrival.
- **If weather is a concern and it is not safe for you to travel to LTRC for your lesson.**
- **If you have comments, concerns or questions.**

REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Email program.ltrc@gmail.com **Registration is first come, first serve.**
 2. You can sign up for multiple sessions, as they are available.
 3. Once you are registered, you will receive further information about your schedule and invoice.
- **Registration Paperwork** that is current, complete, accurate and signed must be on file at least 2 weeks prior to the first lesson you attend. This includes current medical history (accurate height and weight required), and a doctor's statement of release and signature. Registration paperwork is required to be updated each calendar year.

LESSON CALENDAR

- Lessons are held in 4 to 8 week sessions from April to November
- Unless otherwise noted, lessons are held on holidays. We do not follow school closing/holiday schedule
- Closure information will be communicated via phone, text message and social media
- Please refer to registration packet for lesson days and times

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- **MAIL PAYMENT**
Lothlorien TRC
15 Reiter Road
East Aurora, NY 14052
- **DROP OFF PAYMENT**
Payments in envelopes, labeled with the rider's name are accepted at Lothlorien.
Leave in white mailbox labeled "Paperwork & Payments" in office foyer

CASH SHOULD NOT BE MAILED! LTRC is not responsible for mailed cash payments!

FEES SUPPORT OUR PROGRAM: LTRC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and relies on lesson fees, fundraising and volunteers to carry out our programs. The actual unsubsidized cost of a lesson is more than double the fee we charge, but through the generosity of our donors, LTRC is able to provide a standard subsidized rate to make our program as accessible as possible. Some riders receive additional tuition assistance to further subsidize the rate by completing a Tuition Assistance form.

LESSON FEES: Fees are necessary to help defray the expenses of our program. LTRC program fees represent less than the true cost of services.

Lessons are structured in sessions, with each lesson being \$65. 4 week sessions are \$260, 6 week sessions are \$390, and 8 week sessions are \$520.

INVOICES & PAYMENTS

- ❖ You will be invoiced prior to each session of participation
- ❖ Clients will have 30 days to mail in or drop off payment
 - ➔ **In order to maintain participation in the session, full payment prior to the first lesson of the session is required.**
- ❖ Instructions where to mail payments are included below and on the invoice
 - ❖ Cash, check or money order preferred
 - ❖ Make checks payable to **Lothlorien TRC with rider name and customer # on check**
 - ❖ Ask about credit card payments (processing fees may apply)
 - ❖ Service fee of \$50 if check is returned for insufficient funds

THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS:

- ❖ LTRC is not responsible for any third party payments. Client will need to supply the third party payer with the invoice they need paid/reimbursed
- ❖ Client is responsible for requesting and sending receipts to third party reimbursing agencies

RECEIPTS

- ❖ Receipt available upon request
- ❖ Client is responsible for requesting and sending receipts to third party reimbursing agencies

LESSON BALANCE/CREDITS: If you have a balance or credit on account from a past season, that amount will be reflected on an invoice. Credits can be allocated towards a future session(s) and do not expire.

SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES: Services at LTRC are reimbursable through Self-Directed Services. If you are receiving OPWDD self-directed services, please contact your fiscal intermediary to budget accordingly. We provide necessary documentation for reimbursement of tuition paid by the client when requested.

HEALTH INSURANCE, MEDICAID, SELF DIRECTED SERVICES & THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS

Most insurances do not cover LTRC services, however check with your provider as some insurance companies accept our program as a reimbursable recreational expense. Your care coordinator may have other other funding options for you.

TUITION ASSISTANCE: LTRC offers a financial needs-based tuition assistance program and we strive to assist any rider who cannot self-pay due to their financial situation. Requests must be completed prior to

the start of a session and cannot be awarded once a session starts. Because these funds are raised from outside resources to maintain the assistance program, we ask that individuals pay as much of their fee as possible. Assistance is available on a limited basis and awarded annually based on needs and available funds. For more information call 716-949-3551 or visit lothlorientrc.com.

GROUP LESSON FORMAT: One hour long with a max of 3 riders per group.

ON THE GROUND:

First 15-20 minutes: Riders will participate in an appropriate ground activity with their horse & volunteer in the indoor or outdoor arena.

- Active, fun experience and opportunity for riders to get to learn horsemanship skills and care for their partner!
 - Riders may groom, tack, and interact with their horse. Many therapeutic goals are achieved in the grooming and tacking process.
 - Structured to accommodate the needs & preferences of our riders: riders can participate in other activities and interactions with the horse during this time such as stretching, playing a warm-up game, leading, or learning about their horse

IN THE SADDLE:

The remaining 40-45 minutes is for riding time.

- Rider will mount the horse, complete lesson activities such as a warm up, skill-based games and activities, and a cool down, before dismounting
- Amount of time in the saddle depends on the riders' endurance level, tolerance and attention span
- Includes mounting and dismounting of all riders in the group. There are many factors that contribute to how long it can take to mount participants including, but not limited to, the number of participants being mounted, behaviors of participants/horses, special mounting needs (i.e. wheelchair, walker) and tack adjustments. The mounting/ dismounting procedure is an activity that can carry risks to participants, staff, volunteers and horses if not done with patience and strict safety practices. We ask that everyone be patient with this procedure, as LTRC takes pride in maintaining high safety standards.

CAREGIVERS & OBSERVERS

A caregiver is required to remain on-site for the duration of their rider's lesson.

CAREGIVERS AS SIDEWALKERS: Sidewalking needs will be discussed at registration. If your rider needs a sidewalker, we will schedule an LTRC volunteer sidewalker based on availability. We ask that a caregiver be prepared to walk with their rider if an LTRC volunteer is not available. If a rider needs two sidewalkers, 2 caregivers sidewalkers are required if LTRC volunteer sidewalkers are not available. Information about caregiver sidewalking will be provided.

Caregivers who are sidewalking MUST wear close-toed shoes or they cannot participate. A family member or friend (14 or over) can sidewalk. All caregiver sidewalkers and observers must sign the

Caregiver Observer Liability form and return prior to participating. If you are unable to sidewalk, please let us know.

OBSERVERS: Parents, siblings, caregivers and other guests are welcome to observe lessons. Children must be supervised at all times.

ARRIVAL AT LESSONS:

1. Arrive 10 minutes before lesson begins
2. Park in front of the Angel Indoor Arena on your left as you come down the driveway or in the designated spots in front of the office, farther ahead on your right.
3. **Speed limit is 5 MPH!**
4. Go to the arena.
 - **MOST NICE DAYS** = Lessons will be held in the OUTDOOR ARENA
 - **MOST YUCKY DAYS** = Lessons will be held in the INDOOR ARENA
5. Wait outside the arena gate for the instructor to meet you.

HELMET POLICY: Refusal to wear a helmet = No participation

- Participants are required to wear an ASTM-SEI approved equestrian riding helmet (certified for equestrian use) when riding. Helmets are available to borrow.

ATTENDANCE/CANCELLATION POLICY

- **Makeups are not provided for lesson(s) missed by rider**
- **Unless you hear directly from LTRC, lessons are being held.**
- **We do not follow school holiday or closure schedules**

MAKEUP POLICY:

CONTACT 716-655-1335 OR 716-339-7976 IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE ABSENT

Attendance and timeliness is extremely important as it takes a team of horses, volunteers and instructors to execute each lesson. Please be respectful of everyone's time by reporting absences as soon as possible. No makeups provided for lesson(s) missed by the rider.

→ **BE CONSIDERATE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS: PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CAN'T COME TO YOUR LESSON SO WE CAN LET VOLUNTEERS KNOW.** It is because of our volunteers that LTRC is able to provide a safe, enjoyable program. As a 100% volunteer based non-profit, we schedule many volunteers to help in lessons each season. They give hours of their valuable time to the program and we ask for your courtesy in notifying us if you cannot attend your lesson.

LESSON MAKEUPS:

- **ARE OFFERED FOR LESSON(S) CANCELED BY LTRC**
- ◆ Cancellation is at the discretion of LTRC for concerns due to weather, instructor or horse availability, facility issues, etc.

→ **ARE NOT OFFERED**

- ◆ for rider absence for any reason including illness, vacation, schedule conflict, other activities, traffic, coming at the wrong day/time, forgetting about your lesson, etc.
- ◆ if a rider comes to lesson, but refuses to ride or participate or to put on a helmet
- ◆ if a rider arrives late (see below)

LATE ARRIVAL: IF YOU DO NOT notify us that you are running late, your horse will be put back in their stall after 15 minutes of waiting for you and no makeup will be provided. If notified of late arrival and the horse has already been put away, the instructor, at their discretion, may approve grooming in the remaining time of the lesson (depending on rider arrival), which will count as the lesson for that day. No make up or refund will be provided. The 15 minutes is based on the instructor's time device and is at their discretion. **Please call/text the rider hotline as soon as lateness is anticipated, 716-339-7976.**

MULTIPLE MISSED LESSONS: If a participant misses 2 classes in a session and does not notify, or make an attempt to notify, LTRC of their absence, the participant will forfeit the remaining lessons of the session and no refund will be given.

WEATHER POLICY

- ❖ We ride in most weather scenarios, except thunder and lightning, extreme heat/cold, high winds, or heavy rains. **Unless you hear directly from LTRC staff, lessons are being conducted.**
- ❖ If it is **ONLY** raining, lessons are being held!
 - We ride outside in the outdoor arena whenever possible, but if it's raining and there is NO thunder and lightning or high winds, we ride in the indoor arena.
 - Extreme winds/heavy downpours are the exception and monitored on a case-by-case basis.

RESTROOM

- Handicapped accessible restroom (located in the white house with the green door) is open to the public.

SAFETY: Safety is our #1 priority! We expect everyone on site to follow these safety rules:

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

1. Smoking, alcohol, illegal substances or firearms are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** on the premises and are grounds for immediate dismissal.
2. Abusive, threatening or violent behavior will not be tolerated from ANYONE for ANY REASON!
3. Caregiver(s) must remain on LTRC property while the participant(s) they are responsible for are participating on LTRC grounds. If the caregiver leaves the premises, the participant will be dismounted and will forfeit the lesson.
4. Minors (siblings, family members, guests, etc.) **MUST** be supervised at all times.
5. No running, yelling, or throwing objects which can spook the horses or cause injury to our participants/staff/volunteers.

6. Pasture entry is prohibited. Pastures have an electric fence system. Always assume the electric fence is ON.
7. With the exception of service animals, dogs that do not live on-site are not allowed on the property or to be left in vehicles parked on the property during lesson hours.
8. Keep your cell phone or silent or vibrate
9. No photos of others (except your participant) without permission
10. The speed limit on LTRC grounds is **5 MPH**.

SAFETY AROUND HORSES: Think of the horse as having a 6-foot personal space bubble surrounding them. When you enter into their personal space, do so with respect.

1. Always WALK around horses. No running.
2. Always walk around the front of a horse.
3. Never approach a horse directly in front or from behind. Approach a horse from the side - they have extensive peripheral vision, but cannot see what is directly in front or behind them.
4. Do not feed horses, barn cats or other animals. They are on supervised diets and outside food items could cause them to become ill.
5. Don't yell or make sudden movements near a horse. Be slow, gentle and deliberate around them.
6. Speak softly as you approach a horse to let them know that you are coming. Like people, horses do not like being surprised by loud noises or unexpected encounters.
7. Never walk under a horse's neck or under their belly.
8. Wear appropriate clothing when working with a horse. Close-toed shoes are required.
9. Keep your feet clear of the horse's feet. Do not kneel around the horse's feet.

GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL: LTRC reserves the right to dismiss anyone from the program who does not adhere to the rules, policies and procedures set forth in this handbook or fails to meet the guidelines for eligibility. Due to the capacities of staff, volunteer leaders and sidewalkers, program horses, insurance requirements and industry standards, acceptance and/or continuation of a participant depends on the availability of appropriate instructors, volunteers, and suitable horses.

Immediate dismissal

- Possession of a firearm, weapon, alcohol or illegal substances
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Sexual comments, conduct or harassment of any kind
- Disruptive, threatening, inappropriate or abusive behavior/language towards people or animals (horses, cats or any other animals on site)

Other grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Smoking on sight
- Endangering the safety of people, horses or other animals on site
- Repeated disregard or failure to follow the organization's rules, policies and procedures
- Inaccurate, inappropriate or falsified registration information
- Weight gain above the maximum capacity of the program horses available at the time.
- Repeated absences without notification
- A change in medical condition which makes it no longer safe or beneficial for a participant to continue
- Failure to pay in accordance with LTRC's Payment Policy stated in this handbook.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Thoughtful conduct and self-control factor into the safety and enjoyment of all participants. All persons at LTRC will be expected to adhere to the following code of conduct:

- Respect all humans and animals - no abusive language or actions
- Respect all property
- Refrain from loud, abrupt, disruptive, unsafe or inappropriate noises, actions or behaviors

CONFIDENTIALITY: LTRC practices strict confidentiality in regards to participant personal information. Medical histories, diagnoses and related information are used by the staff to develop lesson benchmarks and goals for each rider. General information, as it relates to the success of the riding experience, is shared with the volunteers on a need-to-know basis, with the permission of the rider or their guardian.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: Instructors are expected to respond to any emergency that occurs on site and to provide first aid assistance until a more qualified individual arrives. The lesson emergency word is "HALT". When used, everyone stops and waits for instructions from the instructor. Anyone involved in the lesson - instructor, volunteer, rider or observer - can say 'HALT' to stop the class if they see something that they feel is an impending danger. The instructor cannot see the entire ring at all times and is counting on the eyes and ears of all observers.

EMERGENCY REMINDERS

- The lesson instructor is the primary emergency administrator on site and is in charge during all emergencies.
- LTRC staff or someone appointed by the instructor may be asked to supervise the rest of the class while the instructor is attending to the emergency.
- Emergency evacuation maps are posted in the barn and the indoor arena.
- We practice universal precautions for all wounds, treating all bodily fluids as if infectious. Latex gloves are available in all first aid kits.
- Fire extinguishers are located throughout all facility buildings.

FIRST AID KITS, AED UNIT & BARN PHONE

- First aid kits are located:
 - at main entrance to barn
 - near water hose (in between 3rd and 4th stalls on left hand side)
 - inside indoor arena
 - office restroom
- AED unit is located in the main office foyer
- The landline phone is located in the office. Please use the office phone or your cell phone in an emergency, whichever is faster.

EMERGENCY DURING MOUNTED LESSON: When any emergency occurs during a class with mounted riders, the following procedure will be implemented, as directed by instructor:

1. All sidewalkers and leaders stay with their rider and horse!!
2. All horses will be moved away from the incident
3. Halt horses and turn them so they can see what is going on
4. Do not move the involved participant until instructed
5. Leaders will position themselves in front of their horse without obstructing the horse's view.

6. Sidewalkers are responsible for their rider and will be aware of their emotional state and stability in the saddle
7. If needed, the instructor will appoint someone to:
 - a. Dial 911 from their cell phone or the barn phone and give directions to the center
 - b. Get the First Aid Kit
 - c. Direct the emergency vehicle to the accident site, asking that all lights and sirens be turned off to avoid frightening the horses
8. The instructor will supervise (if needed) the dismounting and evacuation of riders first, then horses from the riding area. Caregiver sidewalkers will escort the riders out of the arena. Leaders will return horses to their stalls or other assigned areas.
9. Initial response First Aid will be administered to the injured / ill rider by the instructor or other qualified personnel until more advanced medical care arrives.

After appropriate action has been taken, an Incident Report will be completed by the instructor or staff member who was involved. Details of the incident, actions taken and interviews with 3 witnesses will be included.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS: Emergency evacuation maps are located in the barn and indoor arena. In the event of a fire or an emergency that necessitates the evacuation of the barn or indoor arena, go to the outdoor arena or the driveway in front of the indoor arena. Listen for directions from LTRC staff.

FIRE PROCEDURES: Fire extinguishers are located in the barn, indoor arena and office. **If a fire occurs:**

1. Everyone leaves the area and assembles in the emergency meeting place for a head count. The primary emergency meeting place is the parking area in front of the indoor arena.
2. Call 911 from a safe location
3. If horses are in the barn, staff will remove them only if able to do so without risking injury to self or others. If possible, place a halter and lead on the horse, cover their eyes and lead out of stall. Bring horses to pastures, or indoor/outdoor arenas, whichever is closest.

STOPPING THE SPREAD OF EQUINE DISEASE: Equine health at LTRC is a top priority. If you visit another horse barn, or have your own horses, you can help us prevent the spread of equine disease at LTRC before you arrive by:

- dedicating footwear and clothing for use only at LTRC. If this is not possible, please sanitize footwear before your visit
- change your clothes that you wore at the other barn before coming to LTRC.
- do not touch other horses that you are not working with
- use grooming tools in assigned grooming bags

LIABILITY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

SERIOUS INJURY MAY RESULT FROM YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS ACTIVITY.

A. **DEFINITIONS:** The term "THIS STABLE" shall herein refer to Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. (LTRC), its Board of Directors, instructors, volunteers and employees. The term "HORSEBACK RIDING" or "RIDING" shall herein refer to riding or otherwise handling of horses whether from the ground or mounted. The term "HORSE" shall herein refer to all equine species. The terms "PARTICIPANT" and/or "RIDER" shall herein refer to a person who rides a horse mounted or otherwise handles or comes near a horse from the ground. The terms "I", "Me", "My", "Participant", and "Rider" shall herein refer to the registered rider and the parents or legal guardians thereof if a minor.

B. **REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANT AND AGREEMENT PURPOSE AND CONSIDERATION:** In consideration of my enrollment in the riding program at THIS STABLE and the signing of the Liability Release in the Participant Registration Packet, I, herein referred to as PARTICIPANT, the listed individual or the parents/legal guardians thereof, if a minor, do hereby voluntarily request and agree to participate in activities and events at THIS STABLE. PARTICIPANT shall ride a school horse provided by THIS STABLE for lesson purposes for today and on all future dates. This agreement shall be legally binding upon the PARTICIPANT and the parents or legal guardians thereof if a minor, my heirs, estate, assigns, including minor children and personal representatives. It shall be interpreted according to the laws of the state and county of THIS STABLE'S physical location. Any disputes by the participant shall be litigated in the county in which THIS STABLE is located.

C. **ACTIVITY RISK CLASSIFICATION, INHERENT RISKS AND NATURE OF THE HORSE WARNING:** Horseback riding is classified as a RUGGED ADVENTURE RECREATIONAL SPORT ACTIVITY. There are numerous obvious and non-obvious inherent risks always present in such activity despite all safety precautions. According to NEISS (National Electronic Injury Surveillance Systems of United States Consumer Products) horse activities rank approximately 64th among the activities of people relative to injuries that result in a stay at U.S. hospitals. Related injuries can be severe requiring more days in the hospital and resulting in more lasting residual effects than injuries in other activities. NO HORSE IS A COMPLETELY SAFE HORSE. Horses are 5 to 15 times larger, 20 to 40 times more powerful and 3 to 4 times faster than a human. If a rider falls from a horse to the ground it will generally be at a distance of from 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 feet and the impact may result in injury or death to the rider. Horseback riding is the only sport where one much smaller, weaker predator animal, the human, tries to control and become one unit of movement with another much larger, stronger prey animal, the horse, with each having a limited understanding of the other. If a horse is frightened or provoked it may divert from its training and act according to its natural survival instincts which may include but are not limited to: stopping short; changing directions or speed at will; shifting its weight from side to side, bucking, rearing, biting, kicking or running from perceived danger.

D. **PARTICIPANT ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY:** PARTICIPANT agrees that the condition of the premises and the facilities will provide an adequate and reasonable level of safety for PARTICIPANT. THIS STABLE is not responsible for any property damage, injury or loss of life incurred by or as a result of any horse(s) on this premises to PARTICIPANT. PARTICIPANT IS AWARE OF THE RISKS AND DANGERS OF THIS ACTIVITY AND AGREES TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY AND ALL INCIDENTS OCCURRING DURING THIS ACTIVITY.

E. **CONDITIONS OF NATURE:** THIS STABLE is not responsible for total or partial acts, occurrences, or elements of nature that can scare a horse, cause it to fall or react in some other unsafe way. Examples include thunder, lightning, rain, wind; wild/domestic animals/insects/reptiles which may walk, run, fly near, bite or sting a horse or person; irregular footing on indoor and outdoor groomed or wild land which is subject to constant change in condition according to weather, temperature and natural or man-made changes in landscape.

F. **RIDING HELMET WARNING:** PARTICIPANT is hereby warned and informed by THIS STABLE that all participants should wear a properly fitted and secured protective EQUESTRIAN riding helmet that meets ASTM standards. Such helmets are available at THIS STABLE; however, THIS STABLE recommends the PARTICIPANT purchase their own helmet to receive the benefit of a

custom fit. Wearing such headgear while mounting, riding, dismounting, and being around horses may prevent death or may reduce the severity of head injuries resulting from a fall or other incident involving a horse. THIS STABLE abides by the NYS Helmet Statute and requires children under the age of 14 to wear an ASTM approved EQUESTRIAN helmet when mounted at all times. Alternative helmets, approved by Stable, may be worn.

G. BREACH OF CONTRACT- Should either party breach this contract, the breaching party shall pay for the other's court costs and attorney fees related to such breach.

I have read and agree to the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook, and understand the risks involved with horses and horseback riding.

----- Participant or legal guardian

----- Caregiver or person attending lessons with participant