

Policies, Procedures and Barn Rules Handbook



Our Mission

Our therapeutic horsemanship programs help those with special needs reach their highest potential, gain self-confidence, and self-esteem, through equine-oriented activities in a safe and positive hill country environment. As a non-profit organization, we strive to give our horses the best care, while working to expand and provide our students the best possible experience. We use the latest teaching techniques to help our students learn, and only use instructors that are Path Intl. certified and possess wonderful interaction abilities. Our employees and our volunteers are our driving force, and without them, what we do would not be possible.

Participation

All riders must have a completed signed and dated Student Enrollment packet before they are permitted to ride. Forms must be updated annually, including medical history forms that will require a doctor's signature.

All volunteers must have a signed and dated Volunteer Enrollment packet before they are permitted to participate. Forms must be updated annually.

Recognizing that equine-related activities hold inherent risks, all new and returning participants will be evaluated and trained by our Path Intl. certified instructors to ensure the safety of all participants, volunteers and horses.

It is the responsibility of the participant or the participant's parent or guardian(s) to inform Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch of any changes in the participant's medical, physical, mental, or behavioral status. A participant is defined as an Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch client, volunteer, or staff member.

Horseback riding is contraindicated for some conditions/individuals. Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch follows the Path Intl. guidelines for precautions/contraindications for physical restrictions of riding.

Weight Considerations for All Riders

Maximum weights are listed below, but decisions regarding participation will be based on the availability of a suitable horse related to the height, weight, cognition and balance of the participant. Risks versus benefits analysis will be conducted to determine which horse will be the best for the participant.

Instructors at Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch will make the final determination for participation.

- 5'0" and Under – 150 lbs.
- 5'1" to 5'6" – 175 lbs.
- 5'7" to 6'0" – 200 lbs.
- 6'1" and over – 250 lbs.

Age Restrictions

- Children with special needs must be at least 4 years of age and have a doctor's consent to ride.
 - Please Note: Children under the age of 5 will be thoroughly screened to ensure that it is completely safe for them to participate in Therapeutic Riding.

- Children under the age of 5 will require a horse handler and at least one sidewalker.
- Volunteers must be 14 years or older to participate in classes.
- Volunteers under the age of 14 must be directly supervised by a parent or guardian. No exceptions.

Dress Code

A volunteer's or student's attire and appearance should be appropriate for safe equestrian activities. For your safety and comfort, please dress as follows:

1. Wear appropriate shoes - **closed-toe shoes only.** Tennis shoes and boots are suggested for volunteers and preferably riding boots for students or a hard-soled shoe with heel. No open-toed, excessive heel, steel toed, cleats, high rubber treaded or dress shoes are permitted.
2. Wear comfortable pants.
3. Shorts must be fingertip length or longer.
4. Wear T-Shirts or Long-sleeve shirts that are weather appropriate. No low-cut tops.
5. Helmets are provided for students, instructors can give recommendations of where to purchase approved riding helmets if desired. Helmets must be ASTM-SEI approved for equestrian use. Instructors can provide more information if desired.
6. No jewelry or other items that can get caught on a rider or horse is allowed (i.e. necklaces, charm bracelets, etc.)
7. Hats and sunglasses are recommended for volunteers, as long as it will not be disruptive to the student.
8. Sunblock is recommended during all sessions.
9. Sweatshirts, coats and gloves are recommended during Fall and Winter Session.
10. Long hair must be pulled back. For riders, long hair is recommended to be pulled back into low ponytails or braids, as to not interfere with the riding helmet.
11. No cell phones are permitted in the arena. If there is an important phone call you are waiting for, please notify the instructor ahead of time so arrangements can be made. In the event of an onsite emergency, instructors always have their phones that can be used to place an emergency call.
12. No food items! (i.e. gum)

For Vaulting Students (In addition to other standards required):

13. Recommendations for footwear include: lightweight canvas shoes, aqua socks, gymnastic or vaulting shoes.
14. Snuggly fitting clothing.

Payments, Cancellations, Punctuality & Attendance

Payments

There will be a sign in sheet on the office door to indicate attendance and payment. The instructor and parent will initial attendance/payment received. Payment from individuals must be received at the time services are rendered. In the event that payment is not received prior to the lesson and IOU slip will be filled out. IOU's must be paid by Monday of the following week (payment can be made on the website) or the rider will not be allowed to continue services until the account has been brought up to date. If there are problems or concerns, contact the Office for assistance.

Attendance Policy

Research has shown that regular, consistent therapy provides best results. Arriving late or missing appointments impairs a client's ability to progress, disrupts staff schedules, limits other clients' ability to arrange appointments and may impact volunteer coverage. It is important that OTR maximize appointment scheduling to control therapy costs. OTR understands that emergencies do arise and will handle these on a case-by case basis.

Cancellation Policy

If you must cancel a lesson, call the office 24 hours or more in advance. OTR utilizes many volunteers who arrange their time to assist with classes and makes every attempt to advise them when they are not needed for a class. Three cancellations in a semester or 5 cancellations per calendar year will result in his/her riding session being offered to someone on the wait list. Failure to notify 24 hours or more in advance will result in a \$25 fee payable at the next session attended. If your tuition is paid by a service provider (DSSW, Scoggins, Caprock, BRM, Concord, Educare, etc.) OTR can only bill for days that you receive services. Therefore, to keep things fair for all participants, if there is failure to notify 24 hours in advance, you will be charged a cancellation fee of \$25 for which you will be responsible.

Riding lessons can/may be cancelled by OTR the day of classes due to the possible following reasons:

Weather: Rain, mud, high temperatures, lightening, and/or wind.

Other: Unsound horse or shortage of volunteers.

In the event of any/all of the weather conditions or other events listed above, Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch holds the right to cancel riding lessons for the safety of riders, volunteers, horses and staff. We appreciate your understanding in these instances. No fee will be charged.

If lessons are to be cancelled the day of classes, an instructor will notify you as soon as the information is available. If in doubt, feel free to call us for the most up to date information. We will also be posting updates on our social media pages, as the information is available to us.

No Show Policy

A no show fee will be assessed at \$25 for both private pay or agency paid participants. More than one no show per semester or two no shows per calendar year will result in his/her riding session being offered to someone on the wait list.

Punctuality

All volunteers/parents/students are required to contact Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch in the event of running late to a riding lesson.

Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch asks that every riding student arrive 10-15 minutes prior to his or her scheduled riding lesson. This allows the student to have the needed time for preparation before their scheduled riding lesson time.

In the event that the rider is 5-10 minutes late, the rider will be mounted and join the group lesson underway, but lessons will end at their scheduled time. In the event that the rider is later than 10 minutes tardy, then the riding lesson will be cancelled for that student. This will be considered a cancellation without prior notification, and the parent/student will be responsible for the lesson fee. The parent/student is welcome to check with the instructor after the lesson to determine if a make-up lesson is available. Please note, a make-up lesson will incur its own lesson fee. **Please do not interfere with the lesson that is underway to discuss scheduling a make-up lesson.**

Horse handlers are to arrive 30 minutes prior to the lesson start time.

Sidewalkers are to arrive 15 minutes prior to the lesson start time.

The policies and procedures of Cancellations, Punctuality and Attendance are based upon the fact that Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch is completely reliant upon volunteers. Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch always takes volunteers' time into consideration and is truly grateful for their help! Without volunteers we could not do what we do!

Off-Limits Areas and Emergencies

Off Limits Areas

The following areas are off limits to all Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch students and guests:

- All Pastures
- Mini Barn
- Any other gated off areas

These areas are off limits for your safety and the safety and health of our animals. Areas will be marked with a restricted access sign, and require permission from Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch staff before entering.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency at Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch, phones are located in the office and have emergency information posted above them. Staff members will also have a cell phone that can be used to call 911 in the event of an emergency.

REMEMBER:

- Remain Calm.
- Get to Safety.
- Call 911.
- Do not hang up unless told to by the dispatcher, they may need more information from you.
- Tell the dispatcher that all lights and sirens must be turned off to avoid frightening the horses, which can lead to further injuries.
- Do not move an injured person unless they are in imminent danger!

Please take the time to review the barn evacuation diagram that is posted in the barn. Copies of the evacuation diagram and full emergency procedures handout are available upon request.

Dismissal Policies

Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch Policy for the Dismissal of Volunteers/Guests

Volunteers or guests may be asked to leave the facility/program for several reasons, including, but not limited to:

- The use of alcohol or illegal drugs at the facility or at any events hosted by Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch.

- Coming to the facility under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Smoking at the facility.
- Mistreatment of the horses or other animals at Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch.
- Persistent disruption of staff during lessons or special events.
- Verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior toward participants, volunteers and or staff members.
- The use of vulgar language, inappropriate jokes, or disrespectful language.
- For frequent missed volunteer times, without prior notification or explanation
- Any other behavior that is deemed inappropriate by a facility director.
- Breach of confidentiality of other participants.

Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch Policy for the Dismissal of Participants

Riders may be asked to leave the facility/program for several reasons, including, but not limited to:

- The development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point the therapeutic riding is no longer beneficial or could be harmful to the participant or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.
- Weight gain above the maximums.
- Mainstreaming of an advanced independent rider whose riding has progressed beyond the ability of our program horses.
- Missing more than three lessons a session without advance notification.
- Incomplete annual forms:
 - Registration and Release
 - Participant's Medical History & Physician's Statement
 - Policies, Procedures and Barn Rules Handbook
 - Confidentiality Agreement
- Displaying threatening behavior, animal abuse, the abuse of other people, verbal abuse of volunteers or others, fire-starting, use of or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at the facility, or behavior that is disruptive to the normal functioning of the program on the part of the rider.
- Breach of confidentiality of other participants.

Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch has strict confidentiality guidelines regarding the right to privacy for all individuals involved with the program. This confidentiality policy extends not only to program participants and their diagnosis/special needs and any sensitive information, but also extends to protect the privacy of others involved with the program including volunteers and staff. It is

extremely important that volunteers and staff respect the individual circumstances of those involved with the program. Please do not take the issues of our participants or personal information regarding other individuals beyond the facility. For full confidentiality policy, please refer to the Confidentiality Policy and Agreement.

The riding instructors will handle all dismissals. The Program Director will be informed of the situation and will be part of the decision-making process whenever possible. A written reason for dismissal will be recorded and placed in the individual's file. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the individual, parents or guardians in private. An appeal may be filed in writing and will be reviewed by the Program Director. The Program Director will review the appeal and pass a final decision, this decision will be final.

Attention! The following rules apply to everyone who visits, participates, volunteers, or works at Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch. Please read and familiarize yourself with all rules and relay information to anyone who may come with you to the barn.

Barn Rules and Safety

No...

- Dogs permitted
- Running in the barn or around the horses.
- Throwing/tossing anything in or around the barn and/or horses.
- Yelling at any human or horse to get their attention or communicate.
- Use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs on grounds or during Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch events.
- Coming to the grounds under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.
- Smoking ANYWHERE on the property.
- Disrespect of others verbally or physically (human or horses).

Do Not...

- Enter animal enclosures/pens/stalls/arena without employee permission and supervision of an authorized adult.
- Give horses extra hay unless instructor has given permission.
- Feed treats if you have not been cleared by instructor.
- Show up unannounced (access will not be granted if we do not know you're coming).
- Put away a sweaty horse (rinse them off until they are cool to the touch).

Never...

- Bridle a horse without permission first from the instructor.
- Cinch or tighten the girth. An instructor will perform this task.
- Ride alone on trails or off the property.
- Take your frustration or anger out on the horse.
- Take a chance; if you are unsure (ASK!).
- Use the ATV without permission (Absolutely no one under 18 may use the ATV).

Always...

- Supervise all children during your time on the grounds.
- Treat horses and others with the upmost respect and courtesy.

- Encourage others to do their best.
- Ask questions if you do not know the answer.
- Close every door/gate you open and lock it behind you.
- **Wear a helmet! (No Helmet = No Ride).**
- Wear closed-toed shoes.
- Dress appropriately and wear hats/sunscreen.
- Let someone know where you are and where you plan to be.
- Pick up after yourself (leave the place you used as clean as or cleaner than when you came).
- Drink lots of water and take breaks.
- Be alert and aware of your surrounding and the horse's attitudes.
- Report all incidents and hazardous conditions to a staff member as soon as possible.
- Pick out feet and brush horse thoroughly before AND after using the horse.

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Compliance of Requirements

I/We have read and understand this document and will abide by all rules and regulations at all times. If a parent or guardian is signing on behalf of a minor, they take full responsibility for carrying out these policies with the minor(s) listed below. I/We understand that if these rules are broken, I/We may be asked to leave immediately, per the instructor's discretion, and may be found to have grounds for dismissal. Any questions or concerns can be answered by a Director during operating hours, opentrailranch@gmail.com or 210-367-8248.

_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant/Parent/Guardian

Date	
Minor(s) _____	_____

Return to Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch before first day of participation

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND AGREEMENT

Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch has strict confidentiality guidelines regarding the right to privacy for all individuals involved with the program. This policy extends not only to program participants and their diagnosis/special needs and any sensitive information, but also extends to protect the privacy of others involved with the program including volunteers and staff. It is extremely important that volunteers and staff respect the individual circumstances of those involved with the program. Please do not take the issues of our participants or personal information regarding other individuals beyond the facility.

Items covered by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Taking photos without permission.
- Approaching a student or volunteer of Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch without their initiation.
- Discussing a student or volunteer's personal information with people unaffiliated with Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch.

Participants have the right to have their information released to themselves or a receiver of their choosing. Participants may request an information release form from Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch that may be filled out and returned to a staff member, so that their information may be released.

Cut along dotted line and return lower half to Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch Staff

I have read and understand the Confidentiality Policy and Agreement, and will abide by all conditions in the policy. I understand that if these rules are broken, I may be asked to leave immediately, per the instructor's discretion, and may be found to have grounds for dismissal.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch

28710 Boerne Stage Road, Boerne, TX 78006

210-367-8248

Student and Volunteer Registration and Release

Participant Information

Rider ___ Volunteer ___

Mr. Mrs. Ms. (Circle One) Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ City: _____, TX Zip: _____ County: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____ Mobile/Cell: _____

In the Event of a Cancellation the Best Number is: _____

Email Address: _____ How Did You Hear About Us?: _____

If Minor (Under 18) or a Dependent Adult, Parent /Guardian Please Provide the Following Information:

Parent ___ Guardian ___ Caregiver ___

Mr. Mrs. Ms. (Circle One) Name: _____ Home/Cell _____

Address/City/State/Zip: _____

Authorizations:

Photo Release: Open T.R.A.I.L. Inc. or persons authorized by Open T.R.A.I.L. Inc. may use and reproduce any and all photographic, video, or other audiovisual materials taken of me/my child/my ward for promotional materials, social media platforms, educational activities, or for any other use for the benefit of the program.

I hereby consent _____ I DO NOT consent _____

Emergency Medical Authorization – This procedure will only be invoked if the emergency contact below is unable to be reached:

In the event that emergency medical aid/treatment is required due to illness or injury to me/my ward/my child, while being on the property or participating in riding or therapy originated at Open T.R.A.I.L. Ranch, 28710 Boerne Stage Road, I authorize Open T.R.A.I.L., their directors, owner, instructors or employees to secure and retain medical treatment/transportation and to released medical information to appropriate medical personnel (if applicable). This Authorization included any treatment/procedure deemed lifesaving by the physician including x-ray, surgery, hospitalization or medication. (If you do not consent, please provide written information on your desired procedures in case of injury or illness)

I hereby consent _____ I DO NOT consent _____

Liability Release:

I acknowledge the risks and potential risks of being around horses. I hereby, intending to be legally bound for myself, my heirs, and assigns, executors or administrators, waive and release forever all claims for damages against Open T.R.A.I.L. Inc., their directors, owners, operators, instructors and employees for any and all injuries, death or other losses that I/my child/my ward may sustain while participating in horseback riding, vaulting, driving or other related activities originating at or with horses boarded at Open T.R.A.I.L. Inc., 28710 Boerne Stage Road.

Signature _____ Participant Printed Name: _____ Date: _____
Adult Participant/Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

Under Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine professional is not liable for any injury or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Signature _____ Participant Printed Name: _____ Date: _____
Adult Participant/Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

Emergency Information

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____ Mobile/Cell: _____

Alternate Contact Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____ Mobile/Cell: _____

Nearest Medical Facility is Assumed if no Information is Entered

Emergency Facility: _____ City: _____

Physician's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Health Insurance Company: _____ Group ID or Other Identifying Number: _____

Volunteer or Rider's Parents/Guardian/Caregiver, Please Complete the Following Section:

Please Check the Following Items that are Applicable:

____ I will be volunteering with (Name of school/organization) _____.

____ I can walk for at least 60 minutes and jog short distances, such as, the length of the arena.

____ I can hold my arm at shoulder height and support a modest weight, when switching arms as needed.

____ I have the following limitation: _____

____ I have a medical condition you should be aware of: _____

____ I have owned 1 or more horses.

____ I have experience riding: Western ____ English: ____ Other: _____

Please Describe any Experience with Disabled Individuals: _____

Volunteers Only

When will you be available for volunteering? You may add a time range or AM or PM.

Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday ____ Saturday ____

Areas of Interest:

____ Side Walker (Training session are held regularly)

____ Horse Handler (Requires Side Walker Training Completion and Horse Handler Training Completion)

____ Fund Raising or Event Planning

____ Publicity

____ Construction (Please Describe Skills): _____

____ Office Help (Filing or Microsoft Office skills required)

____ Phone Calls (Volunteers and scheduling calls)

____ Other (Please Describe): _____

