

STUDENT HANDBOOK



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WELCOME

Welcome to Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding!

CATR is located at Brickhouse Equestrian Center, 2669 Hamilton Road, Johns Island, SC 29455.
Phone: 843-559-6040 Email: admin@catr-program.org Website: www.catr-program.org

HISTORY

Originating in 1991 with a handful of volunteers teaching lessons to just three students, CATR was the first *nationally accredited* therapeutic riding program in South Carolina. CATR currently serves over 140 students with the help of more than 100 trained volunteers! Small group and individual therapeutic horseback riding instruction and educational horse care activities are offered to children and adults with a variety of disabilities. Instruction is uniquely designed for people with cognitive, physical, and emotional disabilities. Programs take place six days a week at Brickhouse Equestrian Center (BEC) located on Johns Island.

MISSION

Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding improves the lives of children and adults with disabilities at the area's oldest nationally accredited therapeutic riding center.

PATH INTERNATIONAL

PATH International is a non-profit organization, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, that exists to promote Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies for individuals with disabilities.

Formed in 1969, PATH International members are individuals and centers that participate in Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT). Individual members are volunteers, riding instructors, riders with disabilities and their families, physicians, therapists, teachers, researchers and concerned individuals. The PATH Intl. centers are the heart of the EAAT community as they bring together all the necessary individuals, horses, equipment and program knowledge. PATH Intl. centers range from small, one-person programs serving a half-dozen riders to large operations with several instructors serving programs that are designed to benefit everyone involved in EAAT. www.pathintl.org

PATH INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Accreditation ensures that the center follows the PATH Intl. standards for safety and best practice in EAAT. The center staff employs a self-check system to ensure that all applicable standards are in compliance while preparing for a site visit by two Certified Center Evaluators. The site visit includes a review of all standards that apply to the specialty areas with which the center participates, and renders a determination as to the accreditation status. PATH Intl. centers must renew their accreditation every five years. CATR is PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center.

PATH INTERNATIONAL INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

The Instructor Certification Program provides criteria for competency and a process to recognize levels of capability for PATH Intl. instructors to achieve professional certification. Three levels of certification are available: Registered, Advanced and Master Instructor. All CATR instructors are PATH, Intl. certified.

BENEFITS OF EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) offer many benefits to individuals with a variety of disabilities. The horse's constant rhythmical movement stimulates the student's whole being, causing them to react with all their senses to a live animal. In the area of physical benefits, sitting on a horse provides a broad base of support combined with subtle input that can be regulated according to the student's needs. The horse's movement relaxes tight muscles and stimulates muscle tone, allowing for improved posture, coordination, balance and range of motion. Specific cognitive and socialization skills improve through the use of EAAT (including unmounted activities) when the focus is on education and behavior. The psychological effects for individuals who participate are demonstrated by increased motivation, heightened self-esteem, stronger confidence and obvious joy!

CATR PROGRAMS

THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Therapeutic riding uses equine-oriented activities for the purpose of contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of individuals with special needs. Therapeutic riding provides benefits in the areas of health, education, sport and recreation and leisure. Experiencing the motion of a horse can be very therapeutic. Because horseback riding moves the rider's body rhythmically in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance and muscle strength. In addition to the therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

INTERACTIVE VAULTING

Interactive Vaulting is an activity that engages participants in a variety of movements on and around the moving horse and a static barrel. Participants practice gymnastic positions on the back of the horse and barrel. This dynamic environment offers movement, educational, social and creative opportunities. In addition, working in a group promotes teamwork, confidence and communication skills.

GROUNDWORK ACTIVITIES

Groundwork activities include any work with the equine that is unmounted. These activities can include grooming, tacking and untacking, leading, long lining and lunging. Participants can learn the nuances of non-verbal communication with the equine as well as strengthen their own motor planning skills, ambulation and core strength through any of these activities. This is an option for those who might not be able to participate in mounted activities as well as for those who are able to ride, but are looking for something new in their programs.

VETERANS PROGRAM

CATR's Veterans Program provides Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies to wounded military veterans in the Charleston area. Since starting this program in 2009, CATR has served individuals with multiple neuro-degenerative diseases, amputations, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress. Motivated by contact with the horse, veterans engage in groundwork and riding.

PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUP

CATR's Public School Program provides therapeutic riding to students from self-contained special education classrooms from public schools in Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties.

GROUP FIELD TRIPS

In order to give more individuals, the experience of coming to the barn and interacting with our therapy horses, we have started offering Group Field Trips that are open to special education classrooms and other groups of individuals with special needs. These field trips can be customized to meet the needs of the group and involve greeting, grooming and learning about the horses.

INSTRUCTOR IN TRAINING

CATR has a program to mentor individuals who are working toward their PATH Intl. Instructor Certification. As part of CATR's Instructor in Training Program students may participate in lessons taught by a developing instructor. The 'instructor in training' will be directly supervised by a PATH Intl. Certified/ CATR Instructor who will notify the student and his/her family, and introduce them to the Instructor in Training before the lesson. Thank you for supporting this important program.

ELIGIBILITY & PLACEMENT PROCESS FOR NEW STUDENTS

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

For all CATR programs, safety and maximizing therapeutic benefits are primary goals.

All CATR students:

- Have to be at least four years old*
- May not have conditions that are contraindicated by PATH International
- Must have the potential to benefit from a CATR program
- Have to have current signed and dated paperwork completed

CATR students who participate in mounted activities cannot weigh more than 180 pounds

*CATR may work with children as young as 3 years old with the assistance of a physical or occupational therapist who is trained in hippotherapy.

PLACEMENT PROCESS

The first step in the placement process is to fill out and return the application packet, which includes:

- Rider's Registration (P1)
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment (P2)
- Health History (P3)
- Rider's Medical History, Physician's signature required (P4)

If no contraindications are present, the applicant will be scheduled for an in-person evaluation at CATR.

Each applicant is evaluated prior to being accepted into CATR programs. A team consisting of a CATR instructor, the Program Director, and when appropriate, a health professional (physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist, mental health professional etc.) will make the final determination of acceptance.

For the applicant, the evaluation provides the opportunity to visit the facility and meet the staff. For the CATR staff, the evaluation determines whether or not the applicant is a candidate for one of the programs offered at CATR.

Once an applicant completes the evaluation and our programs are deemed appropriate, he/she will be added to the Prospective Student List for placement into our program. Students begin lessons in one of the CATR programs as scheduling permits.

REGISTRATION FOR RETURNING STUDENTS

A registration form will be emailed or mailed to each student before each session. Time slots for riding will be awarded on a first come, first served basis for all students. Full payment for each session is due on or before the first lesson of each session. Lesson fees must be paid on a timely basis to reserve the student's lesson time.

STUDENT RECORDS/ANNUAL PAPERWORK UPDATE

Students are required to update their registration information and medical history forms annually. This paperwork is required to maintain our PATH International accreditation. Students are not permitted to ride without up-to-date forms.

CHANGE OF HEALTH OR MEDICAL STATUS

Students must immediately inform their Instructor, **in writing**, of any changes in health or medication. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in weight, increased/decreased medication dosages, revised diagnoses, medical interventions, surgeries, etc.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding accepts students regardless of race, color, religion (creed), gender, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its activities or operations.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Student medical histories, diagnoses and related information are confidential and are only used by the Instructor to develop goal-oriented lesson plans. General information, as it relates to the success of the riding experience, is shared with volunteers on a need-to-know basis.

FEES AND SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

CATR is a nonprofit organization. We raise funds to help reduce the cost of programs to our participants. The lesson fee is \$35.00 to students. This amount only covers about 30% of the actual cost of \$120. CATR provides additional scholarships, based on a sliding scale, to anyone in need of financial assistance. If you are interested in the scholarship program, please let us know and we will send you an application form. Students register and pay by the session. Payment for the session is due before the session starts.

MAKING A PAYMENT

Thank you for making a payment through one of three ways:

1. By credit card - Securely online at www.catr-program.org
2. By check - Deposited in the student payment box in the office
3. By check - Mailed to CATR, P.O. Box 146, Johns Island, SC 29457

Requests for special payment arrangements must be made prior to receiving services.

SAFETY STANDARDS

CATR provides a safe environment for students, volunteers, visitors, staff and horses.

GENERAL

- Keep speed to 10 mph on the driveway.
- Use the designated parking spaces located next to the entry gate.
- Keep dogs leashed at all times and away from riding arena, tacking and mounting areas
- Enjoy any food or drinks in the waiting area. Please leave gum at home.
- Smoking or using tobacco (or e-cig) products on the property is not allowed
- Carrying any kind of weapon while on the property is not allowed
- Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol at any time while on the property is not allowed
- Using, possessing or being under the influence of illegal drugs at any time while on the property is not allowed
- Posing any health risk to others while on the property is not allowed

STUDENTS – FAMILY – FRIENDS

- All students must wear ASTM/SEI approved riding helmets with a chin strap secured when riding or working around the horse.
- For student safety, appropriate footwear for horseback riding is important. This includes a sturdy-soled, ankle-high boot with a heel. The heel should be no greater than one inch. Shoes with bulky rubber soles do not move easily into and out of the stirrup and are therefore unsafe for horseback riding. Footwear for students with special physical needs will be considered on an individual basis.
- Appropriate pants for horseback riding include jeans, heavy cotton trousers, riding breeches or chaps over trousers.

- Students are encouraged to wear gloves, sweatshirts or jackets when needed. Hats are not permitted under helmets for safety reasons.
- If not appropriately dressed and/or not wearing appropriate shoes, students may be offered a ground lesson.
- Upon arrival for lessons, riders and family members/caregivers are required to wait in the designated waiting area (Patio or front office) for their instructor. Instructors will meet riders at this location to guide them to the grooming and riding area.
- Family members/caregivers and guests should use the observation areas outside the arenas to watch a lesson. Siblings and visiting children must be under the supervision of a parent/adult at all times.
- Visitors are always welcome during business hours in the observation area of the facility. If visitors would like more information about CATR or a tour of the entire facility, please arrange this with an Instructor in advance of your visit. You are responsible for your guests.

The barn is a busy place during lesson times. For your safety and the safety of others, please do not congregate in the barn, in front of the barn, or in the pathway leading from the barn to the grooming, tacking and mounting area. These areas need to remain clear for staff and horses. Only staff and trained volunteers are permitted in the barn, paddocks, and arenas.

ATTENDANCE

STUDENT CANCELLATIONS

We know there are times when students will not be able to attend their lesson. Please let us know of a cancellation **as soon as you can and if possible, no later than 2 hours** before a scheduled lesson. Remember that in addition to the instructor there are usually 2 or 3 volunteers who are scheduled and will be driving out to assist with a lesson, so canceling affects many individuals.

To cancel call the office (843) 559-6040 or email admin@catr-program.org.

Cancelled lessons are not made up or reimbursed.

LATE ARRIVAL

Participants arriving 15 minutes or more after the scheduled lesson time will not be able to participate in their lesson. A ground lesson may be offered. Lessons missed due to late arrivals are not eligible for make-up.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students who are not able to continue to attend a scheduled lesson due to a medical, health or family hardship issue, may apply for a leave of absence. The request must be in writing with an attached note from a physician or licensed health care provider. Requests are reviewed and approved by the CATR Program Director and upon approval, remaining fees will be credited.

Students returning from a medical leave of absence will need to present a note from their doctor releasing the student to participate in their usual riding activities.

CATR CANCELLATION POLICY

CATR may have to cancel lessons or close due to severe weather, a power outage or for any reason that may cause unsafe conditions. If this occurs, CATR will email and/or call students 2 hours before lessons or as soon as possible. When in doubt, call the office line at (843) 559-6040 for the most up-to-date information. One makeup lesson will be offered per session if CATR cancels. If a lesson cannot be made up, a credit will be made to the next session.

COMMUNICATION

Any concern is best handled confidentially and directly between the student/parent/caregiver and their Instructor and/or the Program Director. Please call, 843-559-6040, email, admin@catr-program.org, or make a request in person for a time to talk.

Electronic Newsletter - Each student/family receives this publication four times per year. It updates readers on past, present and future CATR and BEC happenings. Please advise your Instructor if you are not receiving our mailings.

INFORMATION BULLETIN BOARD in the Office - In the waiting areas there are bulletin boards reserved for information of interest to students and parents.

FACEBOOK- Please like CATR on Facebook for updates on the facility, student progress, events and more.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Student, Family member, Caregiver, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, courtesy and consideration
- Respect the horses and other animals on the property
- Interact positively and respectfully on CATR social media sites

As a Student, Family member, Caregiver, I will refrain from:

- Humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or degrading anyone while on the property
- Touching anyone in a sexual or inappropriate manner
- Using any discipline that frightens or humiliates anyone while on the property
- Using profanity while on the property

GROUNDNS FOR DISMISSAL

Students/Families who cannot adhere to the rules and policies set forth in this handbook will be dismissed from all program activities.

SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the rules and policies in Charleston Area Therapeutic Riding's Student Handbook. I acknowledge that failure to comply with CATR's policies may result in dismissal from the program.

Printed Name

Signature

Date