



# Rider and Parent Handbook

12372 Riggs Road  
Independence, KY 41051

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[www.milestonesinc.org](http://www.milestonesinc.org)

## **Our Mission**

Welcome to Milestones, a non-profit 501c3 therapeutic horseback riding program. We strive to assist each rider to become an innovative and productive member of the community by building independence, self-confidence, and social skills in a safe, fun, loving environment. Our program is designed to benefit our riders physically, socially, and emotionally by using horses and volunteers who are trained to work with individuals of varying abilities.

The purpose of this handbook is to share our policies and procedures so that Milestones can provide you with the most effective therapeutic riding lessons possible and make your experience with us the best it can be. By reading this handbook and being an active participant in your lessons you will get the most out of your therapeutic riding experience. We look forward to working with you.

## **Therapeutic and Silver Saddles Riding Lessons**

Lessons are taught by trained instructors. We use a team of 1-3 volunteers per rider to assist during each lesson. Riders participate in tasks and games that encourage physical strengthening and cognitive improvement, while learning basic riding skills.

Instruction is tailored to fit each of our rider's specific needs and to help improve their levels of strength, balance, mobility and confidence during the riding experience. The emphasis is on developing riding skills in a safe environment that is both therapeutic and fun. Specific goals are set for each rider at the beginning of a session based upon input from the rider's parents, physician, and therapists.

## **Scheduling**

Milestones will try to take scheduling preferences of the rider into account when placing riders into classes; however, we cannot guarantee the day and/or time that you prefer will be available. We make every effort to place riders into the most appropriate class according to the rider's abilities and age. If there is not an opening in a class that fits rider's ability and scheduling need, you will be placed on a waiting list.

You must re-register each session in order to continue with lessons by contacting the program director at [scheduling@milestonesinc.org](mailto:scheduling@milestonesinc.org). Please note, that lesson days and times may change each session. We cannot guarantee you will be able to continue in the same lesson time each session.

## **Rider Paperwork**

All rider paperwork must be up-to-date and completed annually. Rider paperwork will be due every year in January and must be dated for the current year. No student will be allowed to ride without these forms properly completed, with original signatures, and turned in prior to the lesson. Medical release forms must be completed in full and include the rider height, weight, diagnosis, doctor signature, and dated. Incomplete forms will be returned to you.

## **Rider Limitations**

Milestones has a weight limit for riders for the safety of the rider, our horses, and our instructors.

Weight limitations may differ for persons requiring a full transfer and will be at the discretion of the instructor and program director. Horseback riding may not be a suitable recreational activity for certain individuals and therefore it is necessary for you to have your physician complete and sign the Physician Release/Rider Medical History Form. Should the physical condition of the rider change at any time, Milestones is to be notified immediately and a new Physician Release form must be completed and filed with the office.

Certain conditions require additional precautions to be taken when on or around horses and some conditions are contraindicated to riding. Most activities have some type of precautions and guidelines for participation and horseback riding is no exception. For example: Individuals who have spinal curvatures that are unable to accommodate the movement of the horse, or those who lack neck and trunk control may not be suitable rider participants.

### **Lesson Fees**

Milestones has taken great care in setting participant fees for our services. Our fees are very modest because we subsidize a portion of the cost of our therapeutic riding lessons through fundraising each year. The information below sets forth the billing and payment policies of Milestones.

- Therapeutic Riding Lessons: Group lessons are taught in sessions and billed monthly at \$35 per lesson. When a rider signs up for lessons they are committing to weekly lessons.
- Silver Saddles Riding Lessons: Group lessons are taught in sessions and billed monthly at \$40 per lesson. When a rider signs up for lessons they are committing to weekly lessons.

*Please note: Individual lessons may be considered at the Program Director's discretion and the cost is \$55 per lesson.*

### **Invoices and Payments**

Lesson fees are billed for the entire cost of the session at the beginning of each session via email. The invoice must be paid in full by the end of the session in order for riders to register for future session. Please note, that Milestones does not refund for missed lessons. Please see the "Attendance and Lesson Cancellation" section for more information.

Lesson fees can be paid by check or online. When paying by check please include your invoice number in the memo line. Alternative payment options must be discussed with the Executive Director prior to the first lesson.

Checks and money orders should be made payable to Milestones. Please do not give payments to the instructors. There is a payment drop box inside the Family Viewing Room, or you may mail your check to Milestones, 12372 Riggs Road, Independence, KY 41051.

### **Returned Checks**

Your account will be assessed a \$25 return check fee for each check that is returned to our office. The returned check fee shall be assessed by invoice.

## **Weather Policy**

We will no longer cancel lessons due to inclement weather. We will instead host educational ground lessons during which we will build riders' horsemanship skills and practice therapeutic mindfulness techniques to help riders thrive on and off their horse.

## **Attendance and Lesson Cancellations**

Riders/parents need to contact the **program director** as soon as possible if they need to cancel their lesson. Milestones does not refund for missed lessons. Payment is still expected if you miss a lesson. The rider/parent is responsible for speaking with the **program director** to schedule a makeup lesson for any absences.

PLEASE don't be a "No-show, No-call"- this results in: Unnecessary tacking and untacking of our horses, inefficient use of staff and volunteer time. Excessive absences take a time slot that could be used by another rider.

Milestones does not provide refunds for missed lessons. Payment is still expected if you are absent or must withdraw from the program for any reason. If a missed lesson due to illness occurs, we will work to schedule one make-up per session. If a rider knows ahead of time that they will need to miss a lesson before we send the new session invoice out; up to two lessons can be adjusted. No adjustments can be made after the invoice has been sent out. If Milestones cancels a lesson for any reason, we will schedule a makeup lesson opportunity.

Therapeutic riders please arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled lesson. Silver Saddles riders please arrive no more than 30 minutes prior to your scheduled lesson. A student arriving more than fifteen minutes after class is scheduled to begin or if mounted activities have started, will not be able to participate in the lesson. If there are extenuating circumstances for your tardiness, it is the instructor's discretion if you will be allowed to participate in the lesson that day. Excessive tardiness/absences will result in the rider being removed from the schedule.

## **Clothing and Attire**

For lessons, riders should wear long pants such as riding breeches, jeans or leggings to prevent leg chafing. Please do not wear slick running pants (such as nylon). Girls may NOT wear skirts during their lessons at any time. Athletic shoes with a closed toe and heel are acceptable or boots with a rounded, closed toe and a small heel are the safest form of footwear.

Riders should avoid wearing jewelry; long dangling necklaces and earrings will not be allowed during lesson activities. Safety helmets that meet ASTM-SEI requirements are to be worn by all riders and if necessary, will be provided. If a rider brings their own helmet the Milestones instructor will need to verify it is ASTM-SEI approved.

## **Barn Safety Rules**

1. All students who are not considered responsible for themselves should not be left unattended at any time and must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian until the student is escorted by the instructor or volunteer to their lesson.
2. The person accompanying the rider must be present during the entire riding lesson for all riders under the age of 21 and all non-verbal riders.
3. Riders and parents must wait in the Viewing Room until their lesson time. No rider or parent should be in the barn while other lessons are being held or if the instructor is elsewhere.
4. During lessons, ONLY students and volunteers are allowed in the barn area – parents MUST remain in the Viewing Room, parking lot, or if lessons are in the outdoor arena, the picnic table area.
5. A safety helmet must be worn at all times during the lesson. Milestones has helmets available for use in our office, or you may purchase your own at a local tack shop. Please note, helmets must be ASTM-SEI certified.
6. Riders, parents, visitors, volunteers and staff are always **REQUIRED** to wear close toed shoes when in the barn and around the horses.
7. At Milestones we DO NOT hand feed our horses. Treats are not given to the horses during lessons. Any treats that are brought for the horses need to be given to the instructors and will be given later.
8. There are no pets or outside animals allowed on Milestones property.
9. Any bleeding or open sores must be covered with a bandage, or the rider cannot attend that lesson.
10. Please be sure to advise the instructor of any medical changes such as recent seizures or illness that may affect their riding abilities.
11. Please refrain from coaching or speaking with your rider from the sidelines. It is important their focus remain on the instructor and assisting volunteers.
12. Please make sure that any visitors you bring (including siblings, other family and friends) are kept under your supervision. No climbing/sitting/ standing on the fence, no shouting or loud voices, no running, etc.
13. Horses get scared of strange noises and sights. Children other than the student are welcome with adult supervision but must sit at the picnic area or stay in the Viewing Room. Any visitors that are causing a safety hazard will be asked to leave the premises.
14. Our instructors are always available to answer any questions you have regarding the rider's riding lessons. Please understand that they may not be available directly before or after the lesson but can set up a day/time to address your thoughts.

## **Rider Volunteer Policy**

Riders must complete volunteer application and training session before being able to participate as a volunteer and must be under the supervision of a certified instructor or with a legal guardian present.

**Scholarships and Financial Aid Services**

Financial aid may be available in the form of 'riderships' for those in our therapeutic riding program only, who may have difficulty paying for their riding lessons. Please consult the Program Director for information regarding riderships. For ridership deadlines, procedures and application please go our website: [www.milestonesinc.org](http://www.milestonesinc.org)

Silver Saddles riders are not eligible for Scholarships.

**Solicitation Policy**

Many of our riders sell items for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, school, etc. We ask that items not be sold at Milestones per our solicitation policy, which states: Nonapproved organizations/business or riders are not permitted to engage in any form of solicitation or distribution, on Milestones premises, at any time.

**Client Grievance Policy**

Milestones has a Client's Grievance policy found in the Policy & Procedure Manual. If you have any questions or complaints about the services at Milestones, please talk to your instructor, the program manager, or the Executive Director.