



Morning Star Riding Center Policies, Procedures and General Information

Mission Statement

Our mission at Still Waters Equestrian Academy is to share God's gift of horses with anyone, no matter their age, income, or ability. Morning Star Riding Center exists to serve children and adults with special physical, intellectual, or emotional needs who may not otherwise have the opportunity to work with horses.

The Morning Star Riding Center (MSRC) Program at Still Waters Equestrian Academy offers therapeutic riding services to participants with disabilities and special needs. Because equine-related activities hold inherent risks, all clients will be evaluated by MSRC to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. Prior to a determination of eligibility, the prospective participant, and a parent or guardian (if client under 18), must

- Complete, sign, and return all required paperwork, including liability releases
- Participate in an intake evaluation with MSRC staff

Complete paperwork, containing all required signatures must be received and eligibility approved by MSRC before the first riding lesson will be scheduled

Eligibility for Services: Therapeutic riding activities may not be suitable for all individuals. After the intake evaluation and review of required documents, MSRC will determine the prospective client's eligibility for services.

Eligibility factors include, but are not limited to:

- Client having a medical or psychological diagnosed disorder from a licensed health care provider
- Client being at least 4 years of age as of their last birthday
- Physical mobility level that enables staff to serve client safely during mounting, riding, and dismounting processes
- Physical ability that enables clients to sit symmetrically with torso upright and legs astride the horse during dynamic movement
- Adequate head and neck control to maintain proper alignment
- Ability to accommodate the movement of the horse without pain
- Client weight under the maximum limit for MSRC horses
- Tolerance of an approved riding safety helmet
- Behavior that is healthy and safe for self, horses, staff, and others
- Availability of a program horse suitable to the height, weight, balance, and cognitive function of the client

Dismissal from Program: If it becomes necessary to dismiss a client from the MSRC program, the client or parent/guardian will be informed of the specific reason(s) for dismissal.

Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Client progresses to a level of skill that may be better served by riding lessons for individuals without disabilities or special needs
- Client's status or behavior becomes a threat to the health or safety of self, horses, or others
- Client's weight exceeds the maximum allowable for MSRC horses
- Client's availability does not align with the availability of instructors and/or trained MSRC volunteers suitable to the client's needs
- Client's availability does not align with the availability of suitable MSRC horses
- MSRC staff cannot safely manage the client in situations that include, but are not limited to, mounting, dismounting, or transfer from wheelchair or ramp/block.
- Client or responsible party fail to update the required Physician's Statement form annually.
- Client frequently cancels, arrives late and/or fails to show up for lessons

MSRC reserves the right to discontinue an individual's participation in any MSRC program should it be deemed to be in the best interest of either the client or MSRC.

Weight Limitations: The maximum allowable weight for MSRC participants is

- 240 lbs for a client *not* requiring sidewalkers based on MSRC instructor assessment
- 200 lbs for a client requiring sidewalker assistance based on MSRC instructor assessment

Each horse, however, has individual weight limitations based upon its height, weight, age, and physical and medical condition. The participant weight limit may be lower depending on available horses and the ability of staff and volunteers to safely support the participant at the time services are arranged.

Class Size: MSRC offers individual riding lessons and group lessons of two to four riders.

Lesson Description: All equine-assisted activities are planned for therapeutic benefit with the client's physical, emotional, social, and educational goals in mind.

A typical 30-minute lesson includes 5-10 minutes of time devoted to client preparation for mounted work and 20-25 minutes of ground and mounted activities.

A typical 60-minute lesson includes 10-20 minutes of time devoted to client preparation for mounted work, and 40-50 minutes of ground and mounted activities.

Lessons may include grooming and tacking, leading, warm-up exercises, riding skills development, activities or games to reinforce goals, and trail rides.

Before or during each lesson, the instructor reserves the right to determine the client's suitability for mounted activities. If at any time before or during the lesson the instructor determines that the client is not suitable for mounted activities, the client will not be permitted to mount, or will be dismounted as soon as safely possible.

Current Fee Schedule

- 30 minute individual lesson \$40
- 60 minute individual lesson \$60
- 30 minute group lesson \$35 per participant
- 60 minute group lesson \$55 per participant

Fees are subject to change without prior notice.

Billing: MSRC lessons are billed electronically at the end of each month. For information about billing or payment options, contact Char Cole, char@stillwaterseq.org.

Scholarships: A limited number of scholarships are available to cover partial or full costs of MSRC lessons. Contact char@stillwaterseq.org to request a scholarship application.

Scheduling: MSRC currently offers two sessions for scheduling purposes. The school year session runs from mid-August through mid-May. The summer session runs from mid-May through the end of July.

Client Cancellation Policy: Cancellations by the client must be received by email or text at least 24 hours in advance of lessons, or the client will be billed *the full cost of the lesson*. This applies to all clients, including those on scholarship. Please make every effort to cancel promptly to avoid fees, and so that our volunteers and horses will not be waiting.

Frequent cancellations, requests for rescheduling, late arrivals and/or no shows by the client will result in a client being put on inactive status and no lessons will be scheduled for the upcoming session.

Frequent cancellations, requests for rescheduling, late arrivals and/or no shows occurring *after* a client has been returned to active status may result in dismissal from the program.

Late Arrivals: Arriving 10 or more minutes late for a 30-minute lesson, or 15 or more minutes late for a 60-minute lesson, will result in the lesson being cancelled and the full fee charged.

Program Cancellation Policy: MSRC reserves the right to cancel lessons in the event the safety of all personnel, clients and/or horses is compromised.

MSRC will cancel lessons in the event of air temperatures at or above 97 F and at or below 20 F. MSRC may also cancel lessons due to severe storm activity, wind advisories, icy conditions, and/or large snowfall, regardless of air temperature. MSRC will make every attempt to contact participants by text or email at least 2 hours in advance, in case of cancellations due to weather conditions.

Still Waters Equestrian Academy events may occasionally impact MSRC activities resulting in cancellations or schedule changes. These will be announced in advance.

If MSRC must cancel a lesson due to weather or other factors, the client will *not* be charged for that lesson.

Dress code: Clients must wear long pants and sturdy closed-toe shoes with backs. Sandals, Crocs or any other soft or open-toed shoe are not permitted. MSRC recommends boots with a 1/4"-1" heel, western boots, or paddock boots. Sneakers are permitted, but not recommended.

Clients must wear ASTM/SEI certified helmets for all mounted and arena-based ground activities, including grooming and tacking. Participants may use their own ASTM/SEI certified helmet or utilize the available MSRC helmets.

Barn Etiquette and Safety:

- Running, climbing, yelling, banging, and other loud noises are not permitted in either barn.
- Children not participating in riding lessons must be supervised by a parent or guardian *at all times*.
- No one except lesson participants, instructors, and volunteers may enter the tack room, crosstie area, arena ramp, or the riding arena.
- No one, *including lesson participants*, may approach the horses in the crosstie area without instructor permission.
- No one may pet or feed the horses in either barn without instructor or owner permission.
- Any client or visitor who demonstrates behavior deemed inappropriate, disruptive, or unsafe may be asked to leave the premises
- Smoking, alcohol and/or illegal drug use is strictly prohibited on the premises.
- Weapons, including all types of firearms, are not permitted on the premises.
- The speed limit on the Still Waters property is 25 mph.
- Two parking stalls are reserved for MSRC clients on the southeast corner of the barn. Please take care not to block the driveway on the east side of the barn.
- Enter the barn by the single door on the eastern side of the barn. Please do not open the large barn doors to enter or exit the barn.
- Visitors are welcome to watch lessons from the office viewing area or the bleachers directly adjacent to the arena.
- Dogs are permitted on the Still Waters property so long as they are under their owner's direct control at all times. No dogs are permitted in the arenas, stalls, crosstie (grooming), or feeding areas. Under no circumstances may dogs be permitted to chase other animals on the premises. Still Waters/MSRC may, in its discretion, refuse to permit a particular dog to return to the Still Waters property.

Thank you for reviewing these policies which have been developed to provide a positive, safe, and enjoyable environment for all members of the MSRC community. If you have concerns, questions, or comments please contact **Kristin Carlson, Program Director, kristin@stillwaterseq.org**