



EQUESTRIAN RIDING PROGRAM INFORMATION HANDBOOK

The OVS Equestrian program is designed to achieve four main objectives:

- To teach students to become knowledgeable, independent equestrians;
- To encourage students to gain a lifelong interest in horses and equestrian sports;
- To help students through horses to become more responsible, confident, and compassionate individuals;
- To help students through competition to practice good sportsmanship and work as a team.

All interested students are encouraged to participate, from those who have never before ridden to advanced equestrians competing on a regular basis. Students first learn the basic seat and position and then practice until they achieve the balance and coordination necessary to advance to more specialized riding. Horsemanship is stressed, as well as riding, so that students learn to understand, control, and care for the animals.

Working with horses requires patience, sensitivity, and good judgment - qualities OVS tries to instill in all students. Since class time is short and students are at many different levels, they must learn to be organized, to use their time effectively, to be self-disciplined, and to work independently towards the goals they have set for themselves.

Many students will achieve the basic skills and ride only for recreation, whereas others will work to perfect their skills and compete in equestrian sports. The OVS program encourages and tries to accommodate both types of riders. However, it must be stressed that being an academic school, not a riding stable, the focus is on equestrian education with competition being only one aspect of the total educational experience.

Please review the following information about the program by grade level:

I. Primary and Elementary Riding, grades PK-5:

- Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First-Grade students visit the barnyard once a week to learn beginning animal husbandry. They also enjoy occasional pony rides.
- Equestrian sessions are held once each week for the second and third grade classes. Each student must have his/her own riding boots and an approved riding helmet, both marked with the student's name. These items must fit correctly to give protection to the rider.
- In fourth and fifth grades, riding classes are held three days a week during the Physical Education period. Students may choose to ride each quarter or they will participate in regular P.E. classes. Please note there are additional fees (see Equestrian Fee Schedule) for P.E. riding. Students who take regular P.E. riding classes may sign up for private lessons.

II. Middle and High School Riding, grades 6-12:

- In the middle and high school, grades 6-12, students can choose to ride as their sport during the P.E. class periods which are generally each afternoon, four or five days a week following academic classes. Please note there are additional fees (see Equestrian Fee Schedule) for P.E. riding. Students who take regular P.E. riding classes may sign up for private lessons.



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- III. More about P.E. Riding for students in grade 4-12:
- Across the grade levels, the OVS Equestrian Program is led by professionally trained instructors who teach a course of study that stresses safe, effective horsemanship, equitation on the flat, over fences and on the trail, as well as horse and stable management.
- III. More about P.E. Riding for students in grade 4-12 (continued):
- Riding classes meet during the P.E. class periods. During rainy weather un-mounted instructional sessions are held in the barn.
 - The classes are open to all levels of riders. Students sign up for the classes during the first day of each trimester. Riders are accepted on a first-come basis, as long as space is available. No participation changes can be made after the first two weeks of the quarter, and all necessary riding forms must be signed by the parent or guardian.
 - Instructors assign a horse to each student. It is the student's responsibility to care for this horse, including grooming and exercise.
 - Students in P.E. riding must have their own riding boots and an approved riding helmet, both marked with the student's name. These items must fit correctly to give protection to the rider.
- IV. Special Events and Activities:
- The staff often arranges equestrian demonstrations, especially during Family Weekend. Horse camping trips, trail rides, local schooling shows, and field trips to shows, professional clinics, and equestrian-related events are some of the other special activities for riders.
 - As part of the program, the school offers recreational riding on Saturdays for middle and high school students enrolled in the P.E. riding program. Recreational (Rec) riding is only open to those students who have taken at least one quarter of P.E. riding or who have been approved by the Equestrian Director. Rec riding will be planned on Saturdays at 10:00am when it does not conflict with other activities, and students must sign up by the specified time. Instructors supervise all riding activities. Students are encouraged to practice exercises learned in class.
 - Camp trips for middle and high school riders are typically offered each year. There is a limit of 8 students per trip. The Equestrian Director will select students based on attitude and ability level, and only students enrolled in P.E. riding may participate in camp trips. There will be a fee of \$200.00 per trip to cover the extra expenses of transportation and special shoeing.
- V. OVS Competitive Team:
- The OVS Competitive Team is for students in grades 9-12 and designed for a limited number of serious equestrians who want to participate in local shows and clinics. Selection of the team members is done by the Equestrian Director on the following basis:
 - a) Enrollment in the regular P.E. riding program
 - b) Regular class attendance and fulfillment of assigned duties
 - c) Ability level and readiness for serious competition
 - d) Academic standing (student with academic problems may not be able to spend the extra time required for these activities)
 - e) Spirit, attitude, and cooperation with instructors.



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- There is a \$750 per trimester fee for those participants in the OVS Competitive Team. This fee includes:
 - Preferred school-horse assignment
 - Weekly private/semi-private lessons during free periods or lunch
 - One show and clinic (at minimum) will be available per trimester. See below for extra expenses and necessary equipment for showing.
- Participation in shows will be at the discretion of the Equestrian Director and will be based upon the following considerations: Good sportsmanship, readiness for competition, availability of school transportation and staff supervision, and coordination with other OVS activities.
- Expenses associated with competitive riding are extra and can include: Entry fees, stabling, and horse transportation, which may be paid directly by the parents or billed to the student's sundry account. Show entry fees vary depending upon the type of show and the number of classes entered. Horse transportation will be charged depending upon the show's location.
- The School has serviceable tack (bridles and saddles) though most serious riders want their own equipment, which will fit them properly and look nicer. Team members will be expected to have appropriate riding attire for daily work and for competitions, including:
 - Leather boots
 - Hunt coat
 - Riding breeches (light colored for competitions)
 - Ratcatcher
 - AHSA approved velvet hunt cap with jumping strap
 - Riding gloves
 - Jumping bat
 - Jumping vest (cross-country)
- Parents wishing to limit the amount of competition, and the costs associated, should discuss arrangements with both their children and the Equestrian Director.
- OVS is a United States Pony Club Riding Center. Students in grades 4-12 will have the opportunity to earn Pony Club certification and participate in rallies and competitions.

VI. Private Lessons:

- All of the instructors are available to teach private lessons; however, students who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity must arrange lessons through the Equestrian Director.
- Fees are \$50 for a private lesson and \$40 for a semi-private lesson. There is an additional \$10 charge for use of an OVS school horse. All fees must be billed through the sundry account.
- Lessons may not be planned during class time or team practices.

VII. Private Horses:

- Private horses are welcome as long as they are compatible with the school program and there is space available.
- Students who wish to bring their own horses must have:
 - Prior approval of the Equestrian Director
 - Boarding Contract signed by the parent financially responsible for the horse
 - Verification from a veterinarian that the horse is in good health and that all vaccinations are up-to-date, (tetanus, sleeping sickness, rabies, influenza, strangles, rhino, and west nile virus)
 - Rhino and flue boosters will be required if the horse leaves the school for breaks



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- All tack and equipment needed for that horse, and a tack trunk large enough to hold all personal equipment except the saddle.
- Owners of private horses pay a boarding fee. There is no additional charge for the P.E. riding class
- Owners of private horses must pay any extra expenses related to their horses including veterinarian care, shoeing, trailering, turnouts, longeing, schooling, and additionally requested feed supplements or bedding. These charges will be billed through the student's sundry account.

VII. Private Horses (continued):

- The local feed store (Ventura Hay Company) will open charge accounts for students and will deliver to the school.
- Owners of private horses must be responsible for their horses including daily care, grooming and exercise.
- No other student will be allowed to ride or attend to a private horse without signed permission from the horse's owner and direct supervision by a riding instructor.
- Private horses may not stay for vacations unless such arrangements have been made in advance. There is a \$100 per week fee for vacation stays to ensure proper care and exercise.
- Private horse owners will be charged a monthly boarding fee. This fee will not be pro-rated for horses leaving for weekends or short vacations.