OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL

2026-2027

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 to Third-Grade students visit the barnyard to learn beginning animal husbandry. They also enjoy occasional pony rides. Each student 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.

In 3rd, 4th and 5th Grades, riding classes are held 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. 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.

III. More about P.E. Riding for students in Grades 3-12:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

IV. Special Events and Activities:

- As part of the program, the school typically offers recreational riding on Saturdays for middle and high school students enrolled in the program.
- Participation in shows will be at the discretion of the Equestrian staff and will be based upon the following considerations: Good

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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)

V. Private Horses and Private Horse Leasing:

• Private horses are welcome as long as they are compatible with the school program and there is space available. The cost for private horse boarding is $950 per month.

Students who wish to bring their own horses must have:

- Prior approval of the Equestrian staff
- 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
- 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
- Owners of private horses must pay any extra expenses related to their horses including veterinarian care, shoeing, trailering, lunging, schooling, and additionally requested feed supplements or bedding. These charges will be billed through the student's sundry account.
- 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.

• Students also have the option, for an additional fee, to lease a school horse for their exclusive personal use. Fees for this option are as follows:

- School horse lease - $5,000 per trimester
- Partial horse lease - $2,500 per trimester
- Competitive horse lease - $10,000 per trimester
- Lunging - $50 per session
- Training ride - $80 per ride