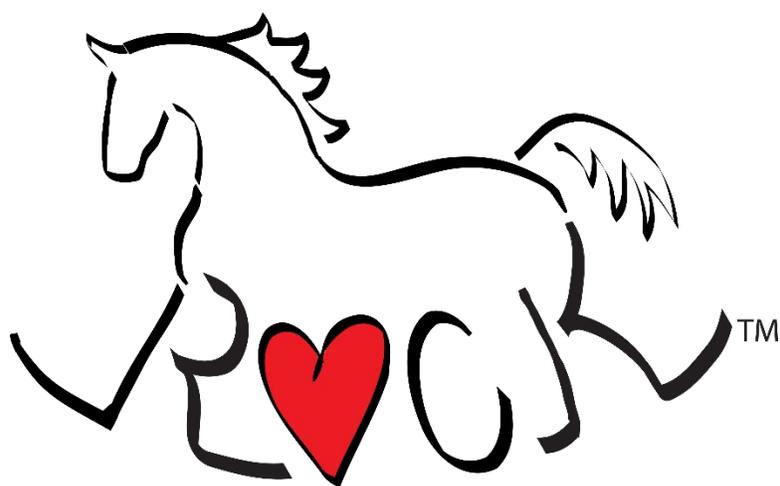


# **ROCK PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**



*Healing Thru Horses*

**ROCKRIDE.ORG**

**2022-2023**

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## **1) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

In an effort to continuously improve and better communicate policies and procedures with participants and guardians, the following changes were made for this coming year at ROCK:

- Horse Shows
- ROCK Policies
  - Weather Policy
  - Service Animals
  - Attendance/Cancellation policy
- ROCK Information
  - Volunteers

## **2) OVERVIEW OF ROCK**

### **VISION**

ROCK's vision is to be the trusted leader in equine-assisted services through research, education, and programs.

### **MISSION**

Improving independence and life skills in partnership with the horse.

### **ROCK'S STRUCTURE**

R.O.C.K. Ride One Center for Kids (ROCK) is a non-profit 501(c)(3). It is a teaching and research facility governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, which is organized into strategic implementation teams. ROCK receives funding from private and corporate donations, grants, participant tuition, and proceeds from special events. The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) certifies all ROCK therapeutic riding instructors. Licensed therapists (PT, OT, or Speech) are required to have training from the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA). Horse Handlers and Side Walkers are trained in specific methods to help support goals developed with your instructor and/or therapist for the most beneficial and safe experience possible.

### **ROCK'S STORY**

Nancy O'Meara Krenek, a physical therapist with a big vision, one horse, and four potential participants founded ROCK in 1998. After resigning from her school physical

therapist position, she immersed herself in training that would enable her to implement her vision to provide equine-assisted therapy to those in need.

Nancy sought to purchase 5 acres of land and ended up with a donation of 20 acres from George and Barbara Brightwell. Word spread about the positive effects of equine-assisted services (EAS), ROCK took on more participants, added more horses, and hired more staff. EAAT was working; participants experienced positive changes and told others about their results.

In 2005, Scott Sjule, manager of the Horse Detachment at Ft. Hood, was asked by Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio to use his horses to help rehabilitate soldiers who had amputations. Sjule contacted ROCK to request help and a new dream materialized. The collaboration contributed to ROCK creating its own veteran program, ROCK On Veterans. ROCK raises funds to support the ROV programs which often include weekly adaptive), followed by fellowship and dinners provided by volunteers and donations.

In 2011, ROCK was contacted by Texas A&M to develop Equine Assisted Services at Texas A&M in College Station. The Courtney Grimshaw Fowler Equine Therapeutic Program (Courtney Cares) was created. ROCK manages all aspects of this program including designing the program, staffing, and accreditation. Courtney Cares partners with Texas A&M Corps of Cadets' Parsons Mounted Cavalry for the use of their horses. The purpose of Courtney Cares is to create a place for Texas A&M students to learn and understand the principles of equine-assisted services.

The demand for equine-assisted services and therapy at ROCK has not slowed. ROCK serves over 350 participants and their families every year. ROCK continues to grow to meet the needs of the community. The land campaign began with a gift match challenge from Charles Avery in early 2014. By the end of that year, ROCK purchased an additional 20 acres of land adjacent to the existing property. Later ROCK was able to purchase the 20 acres in the south of the ROCK campus. A capital campaign is currently underway raising funds for the payoff of land and expansion and buildings.

We are so grateful for those who believe in ROCK. Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward to make the land purchase possible as well as to those who will be part of this very exciting expansion. Please contact Nancy Krenek or one of the board members if you are interested in exploring how you can be part of building the future of ROCK and enabling even more individuals to experience Healing Thru Horses!

## **BENEFITS OF EQUINE-ASSISTED SERVICES**

The benefits gained vary from person to person and depend on numerous factors including the type and severity of the condition, the individual's motivation, and the connection between the person and the horse. Pairing horses with children and adults who have physical, mental, or emotional disorders have been shown to produce remarkable results.

- Children with autism and attention deficit disorders often have difficulty communicating and interacting with others, but frequently will achieve the desired results when they have the opportunity to be in a therapeutic environment with the horse.
- Veterans have shown a decrease in anxiety and an increase in quality of life.
- Individuals with mobility challenges are frequently able to build up their core strength in ways that traditional physical therapy was not able to provide. The movement of the horse simulates walking and stimulates muscle systems in a unique way that only the horse can provide.
- Individuals experiencing aggressive and/or anti-social behaviors may become calmer and appropriately responsive to those around them.

### *Additional Benefits:*

- Improved gait.
- Improved speech and language skills.
- Improved muscle tone and coordination.
- Improved gross and fine motor skills.
- Enhanced balance and posture.
- Stimulates the cardiovascular system and promotes wellness.
- Builds self-esteem and confidence.
- Improves memory and organizational skills.
- Improves ability to perform activities of daily living.
- Improves communication skills.
- Improves problem-solving skills.
- A relationship is developed between the participants, volunteers, and the horse.

Research studies have shown that just being around horses can change our brainwave patterns. There is a calming effect that comes from being with the horse, resulting in a positive experience. According to Franklin Levinson, an internationally known horseman and the creator of the Beyond Natural Horsemanship Program:

Horses react as a mirror to the person who's with them. He's a prey animal so he wants to feel safe and is always on the lookout for predators. A horse will become very fearful if he's with someone who's aggressive, noisy, disrespectful, or too controlling. On the other hand, if the person makes requests rather than demands the horse will begin to cooperate. He is always looking for a leader.

It is natural for us to want to please the horse and thus, the horse motivates us to be fully in the present, to put aside emotions such as anger or frustration, to speak and physically respond to the horse in a way that is calming and acceptable to the horse. The horse helps us draw on the self-healing potential that is within each of us.

## **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS**

Sessions are 45 minutes and include mounted and un-mounted activities. They may include riding skills, fitness exercises, gym activities, horse care, arena preparation, and team building. Each session includes individualized goals. Horses are an essential part of the team as they facilitate learning, motivation, and skill-building.

- **Adaptive Riding, (Private Session):** This consists of one instructor or therapist and one participant.
- **Adaptive Riding, (Semi-Private Session):** This consists of one instructor and two participants.
- **Adaptive Riding (Group Session):** This consists of one instructor and a maximum of four participants. The sessions will be offered throughout the week and in the evenings.
- **Speech Therapy, or Physical Therapy:** This consists of physical therapy or a speech-language treatment that utilizes the movement of the horse to help achieve functional goals. This treatment can specifically address impairments of muscle tone, range of motion, motor planning, timing, attention, awareness, coordination, balance, speech, and postural control, and communication skills.

## **IS ROCK RIGHT FOR YOU?**

ROCK currently provides services to participants ranging in age from 2 to 92 with many different physical and cognitive challenges including, but not limited to:

|                        |                   |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Autism                 | Brain Injury      | Cerebral Palsy    |
| Developmental Delay    | Down Syndrome     | Genetic Syndromes |
| Learning Disabilities  | Muscular Weakness | Speech Impairment |
| Spinal Cord Impairment | Stroke            | Visual Impairment |

In order to provide the best benefit and the safest environment for our participants, ROCK has established guidelines for acceptance into the program:

- Participants must be at least 2 years of age for Equine-Assisted Services (i.e., PT, Speech, or HPOT).
- Participants must be at least 4 years of age and have emerging head and neck control for Adaptive Riding.
- A therapist or instructor will screen each participant before they are allowed to participate at ROCK.

Please contact our office at (512) 930-7625 if you have any questions or need additional information.

## **3) APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **PROCESS AND SUBMISSION DATES**

PATH Intl. requires ROCK to update applications each year. ROCK's fiscal year begins July 1 and runs through June 30. Semester programs vary depending on the season. Applications for ROCK's existing participants are accepted beginning the first Monday in May. By 10:00 am a link will be emailed to returning participants. Please use only this link to fill out the application. If you have questions, please contact Kristin Witcher at (512) 930-7625 ext. 316. New participant applications are accepted beginning the first Monday in June. On that day, new participants may fill out the application that is found at <https://rockride.org/participant-application/>.

All pages of the application must be thoroughly completed and submitted before a participant's application will be processed. The medical release forms need to be turned in by the first Monday in August. If we do not receive your medical release forms by then, you will not be put on the schedule until it is received. This could jeopardize the day and time you have requested. If you don't have access to a computer, please turn in the application to ROCK's office by personal delivery or by

mail. Paper copies of the application are available through Kristin Witcher at [kristinw@rockride.org](mailto:kristinw@rockride.org) or call 512-930-7625 ext. 316.

Applicants that do not get a placement for the year will be placed on a waitlist for the current year only. ROCK continues to accept applications throughout the year. These applicants are also placed on the waitlist for the current year only. All applicants will need to reapply the following year if they wish to participate.

## **APPLICATION FORMS**

All application and consent forms can be found online here:  
<https://rockride.org/participant-application/>

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION**

ROCK believes that no participant should be turned away due to financial hardship. A financial assistance fund is available for participants who could not otherwise participate. Financial assistance applications must be renewed each riding year. Financial assistance is awarded for the full riding year.

To apply for financial assistance, please fill out the application online. The application will need to be completed along with a letter of need and a copy of the first page of your most recent tax return. A select committee reviews all applications. Financial assistance is given using a sliding scale that is based on income and the letter of need. Families will be notified of the amount of financial assistance.

Protecting participants' privacy is very important at ROCK. The documentation for the financial assistance application is not kept with the rest of the application records. Only one staff person processes the information. When the committee reviews the applications, the participants' names are kept anonymous. When the process is complete, all tax documents are destroyed.

Applications for financial assistance must include:

- Completed financial assistance form.
- The first page of the most recent IRS income tax return.
- If the participant is a minor, the tax return for the responsible party is required.
- A letter to the financial assistance committee explaining your need for financial assistance.

You will be notified in writing the amount of financial assistance you have been awarded.

## **SCHEDULING POLICY**

Participants will be scheduled based on when they turn in their application, by their needs, goals, and abilities. Other considerations include the schedules of therapists,

instructors, and horses. Please be aware of the restrictions placed on riders from agencies as this will affect when you may be able to participate.

On the scheduling form included in the application process, place a 1, 2, and 3 in the boxes for your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices. ROCK will try to accommodate your choices, however, there is no guarantee that all first choices can be accommodated.

## **NEW PARTICIPANTS**

Upon receipt of all required paperwork, you will be contacted to schedule a screening. A ROCK therapist or instructor will screen new participants before they are accepted into the program. Acceptance into the program is always dependent upon the availability of volunteers and instructors/therapists, appropriate horses, and safety precautions.

## **WAITLIST**

Applicants who are not offered a riding spot will be put on the waitlist. They will remain on the waitlist through the current riding year. Should a spot become available, ROCK will notify the family by the phone number and email address provided on the application. Applicants will have 48 hours to respond when contacted. If they decide to ride, applicants will be scheduled for screening. Once screened, applicants will be placed on the schedule as soon as a horse, instructor/therapist, and volunteer(s) are available. If the applicant declines, the applicant will either be removed from the waitlist or if the decision is due to a scheduling issue, the applicant will retain their spot on the waitlist. Applicants who have not been offered a riding spot prior to the next year's application will be required to re-apply for the following riding year.

## **WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPANT**

Please notify the office prior to the day of a participant's withdrawal. Participants or guardians of participants are responsible for paying their balance in full.

## **4) BILLING POLICIES**

### **TUITION/FEES**

Participant fees are necessary to help defray the expense of equine-assisted services. Fees cover only 32% of the actual cost of each session. Below is a list of tuition and fees:

- Screening Fee: \$35 (One-time fee paid at initial screening)
- Administration Fee: \$25 (Paid each year by the first Monday in August) This fee is applied once you are placed on the schedule.

- Therapy Sessions (PT or ST): \$90 per therapy session
- Adaptive Riding:
  - Private - \$70 per session
  - Semi-Private - \$60 per session
  - Group - \$55 per session

Summer Camp: Varies based on camp. Refer to the website for details.

## INVOICES

Participants will be billed thirty days in advance for each month. Payment is due on the first of each month for the upcoming month. If a participant is having difficulty staying current on payments, they are encouraged to apply for financial assistance or to set up a payment plan. If you have an outstanding balance, it must be paid in full before the participant can apply for horse shows, summer camp, or the riding session next year.

If your tuition is paid by a service provider (DSSW, Scoggins, DARS, etc.) ROCK can only bill for days that you receive services. Therefore, to keep things fair for all participants, if you have an unexcused absence or do not show up for the session, you will be charged a cancellation fee of \$25, for which you will be responsible. If the sessions are canceled by ROCK, no fee will be charged.

Tuition and fees are payable to ROCK by credit card, cash, or check. Automatic payment may be set up throughout the year using a credit card. There is a payment box in the Welcome Center. The front desk can direct you to its location. If you need to discuss financial issues, please contact Rebecca Delich, Bookkeeper, [accounting@rockride.org](mailto:accounting@rockride.org).

## LATE/MISSED PAYMENT POLICY

A payment is considered **late** when it has not been received by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each billing cycle. If a participant is late in paying their bill more than 3 times, they will be removed from the program. The participant is welcome to apply for the next riding session on the first Monday in May.

A payment is considered **missed** when it is not paid before the next billing cycle. If the total amount due is not paid by the next billing cycle (a month after the missed payment) the participant will be removed from the program. Their riding timeslot will be offered to someone on the waitlist. If at any time during the yearly session they pay the total balance due and their riding spot has not been filled, they may re-enter the program if space is available. There is no guarantee that they will be offered their original time slot.

## **INSURANCE/MEDICAID**

Currently, ROCK does not accept private insurance or Medicaid. If requested, ROCK will provide you with an invoice for physical therapy or speech therapy to submit to your insurance.

## **5) SESSION PROCEDURES**

### **OVERVIEW**

Sessions are 45 minutes and include mounted and un-mounted activities. They may include riding skills, fitness exercises, horse care, arena preparation, and team building. Each session includes individualized goals. Horses are the foundation of the team as they facilitate learning, motivation, group skill-building, and three-dimensional symmetrical movement.

During a session, up to 6 participants may be in the arena at one time. At times this may create a delay in getting participants on horses. ROCK makes every effort to keep that delay to a minimum by reviewing procedures for efficiency. If there is a delay, ROCK will rotate the order that which participants mount horses each week.

### **ARRIVAL**

It is important for a participant to arrive 10 minutes prior to the scheduled session time so that he/she will be prepared for the services provided. This gives the participant time to put on a helmet, greet people, and not be rushed. If a participant is late for the scheduled session time, ROCK cannot guarantee he/she will be able to ride or receive services for the full time. Once the session has begun, the instructor/therapist may not be able to leave the other riders to mount late-arriving participants. Tack will be taken off the horse and volunteers released 15 minutes after the scheduled session starts. Please contact your instructor/therapist at ROCK if you are going to be late.

### **ATTENDANCE AND CANCELLATIONS**

In order to maximize the participant's progress, it is critical that he/she attend all scheduled sessions. Arriving late or missing sessions impairs the participant's ability to progress, disrupts staff schedules, and may affect agency coverage.

Please note the following:

If you are unable to make your session, please give ROCK a minimum of 24 hours' notice. If you have a last-minute cancellation, contact your instructor/therapist directly or call the office at 512-930-7625.

Cancellations made in less than 24 hours will result in a forfeit of credit for the missed session. We understand emergencies happen or a participant may get sick within the 24-hour cancellation period. If this happens, please contact your instructor/therapist as soon as possible to cancel the session. If you can bring a doctor's note, then you will

receive credit for the missed session. Agencies will not pay these charges, so families need to be prepared to pay out of pocket.

If you do not call and do not come for your appointment time, you will not receive credit for the missed session.

Six cancellations per fiscal year will result in the loss of your scheduled session time and if applicable your financial assistance. A cancellation will be waived with a doctor's written excuse.

ROCK's schedule leaves little to no room for scheduling make-up sessions. Therefore, cancellations will have no guarantee that a make-up session can be scheduled.

If you are returning after an injury or hospital stay, you must have a note from the doctor to return to riding at ROCK.

## **CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS**

ROCK requires closed-toed shoes and helmets to participate in equine-assisted services. ROCK provides helmets. If you choose to have your own helmet, it needs to be a labeled ASTM/SEI-approved helmet and cannot exceed more than 5 years past the manufacture date. Please see your instructor or therapist with any questions.

Wear comfortable clothing such as long pants or shorts based on the weather. Do not wear jeans with sequins on the pockets as it may cause damage to saddles. For shoes, wear closed-toed shoes or boots. As the weather changes consider sunscreen, gloves, or a jacket, as needed.

## **WEIGHT GUIDELINES**

A participant's weight plus tack should not exceed 20% of the horse's weight. For example, a participant that weighs 180 lbs. using a saddle that weighs 20 lbs. should ride a horse whose weight is greater than 1000 lbs. We are not able to accept participants over 250 lbs. for mounted lessons. Please talk to your instructor/therapist if you have any questions.

## **CAREGIVER ONSITE POLICY**

Caregivers of participants that ride at ROCK may leave the premises if the following conditions are met. First, the caregiver informs the instructor/therapist that he/she is leaving. Next, the caregiver returns to the premises before the participant dismounts from the horse. Finally, the participant must be completely independent in the restroom.

## **INSTRUCTOR/THERAPIST COMMUNICATION**

At the beginning of each riding year, your instructor or therapist will send you an email of introduction that has their contact information. In addition,

instructors/therapists will send emails over the breaks to check in with you. Email or call them directly if you have questions or updates throughout the year. Instructors/therapists need a minimum of 24 hours to respond to emails or phone calls as they are in the dirt working with participants throughout the workday.

We realize that it can be difficult for long or private conversations before or after sessions. If needed, ROCK will provide a private area suitable for conducting a confidential interview or for processing sessions. The private area may include but is not limited to a private office, gazebo, or other outside space.

If you have questions or concerns regarding sessions, begin by talking with your instructor or therapist. If you need further assistance, your instructor/therapist can direct you to a different staff member or the person who can help. You may also refer to the staff page on the website for assistance finding emails or phone numbers.

## **PARTICIPANT GOALS**

Goals are created each year for participants based on the participant's current goals, goals from previous years, and input from the therapist or instructor. For new participants, goals are created after

## **6) HORSE SHOWS**

Most years, ROCK participates in three horse shows. These include the following shows.

- **Gold Stirrup:** The show is held in March during the Austin Rodeo at the Travis County Exposition Center. The minimum age requirement for participation is age 8.
- **Special Olympics Area:** The show is held in April. The location varies. The minimum age requirement for participation is age 8.
- **Special Olympics State:** The show is held during May each year at the Brazos County Expo Center in College Station. The minimum age requirement for participation is age 12. This competition also requires that the participant has participated in Special Olympics Area.

Deciding if a participant is ready to attend a horse show should be based on the participant's ability to complete the tasks asked of the rider during the horse show. If after reviewing the below tasks you still have questions about participation, please discuss them with your instructor/therapist.

- **Trail Riding:** A horse and a rider maneuver around a series of obstacles.

- **Barrel Racing:** A horse and rider attempt to complete a pattern around preset barrels in the fastest time.
- **Equitation:** A horse and rider follow commands from a judge while in the arena. For example, the judge may ask the rider to walk, trot, halt or reverse.
- **Showmanship with Halter:** This involves a person on the ground, leading a horse wearing a halter through a series of maneuvers called a pattern.

To help our participants be successful at horse shows, ROCK works to select the best horse for each participant. This may not be the horse the participant is currently riding. Many factors go into this decision including but not limited to what is best for each participant, the temperaments and show experience of each horse, the horse show schedule, available volunteers, etc. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your instructor or therapist as soon as possible.

## **7) PATH INTL.**

ROCK is a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. PATH Intl. stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted services. PATH Intl. is the largest organization governing equine-assisted services promoting safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted services for individuals with special needs.

ROCK has been a Premier Accredited Center with PATH Intl. since 2000. This means that ROCK has voluntarily participated in a site visit from PATH Intl. to ensure that it is following the safety standards for horse care, service, and business set by PATH Intl. ROCK goes through reaccreditation every five years. Being a Premier Accredited Center means ROCK implements best practices for the industry.

## **8) ROCK POLICIES**

### **RESEARCH AND TEACHING**

ROCK has made a commitment to being a leading research and learning facility. Conducting research and teaching people to become instructors are essential to this mission. At ROCK, interns and instructors in training will participate in sessions by observing and learning from ROCK Certified Instructors and therapists and by teaching our participants. ROCK partners with area medical centers and universities for research to help further best practices, reimbursement from private insurance companies and improve services. A ROCK participant may be asked to participate in a research opportunity. We hope you will support this very important component of ROCK.

### **WEATHER POLICY**

The ROCK instructors and therapists make every attempt to provide services, even in inclement weather. Sometimes, if riding is not possible, un-mounted horsemanship sessions may be given inside or goals will be worked on in the therapy room.

If temperature + humidity is over 150 degrees, if the RealFeel temperature drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or if there is any inclement weather, alternative sessions will be held in the therapy room or other rooms to work towards the participant's goals and objectives. For consistency, the AccuWeather app on smartphones will be used to determine the weather. If Georgetown ISD cancels school, then ROCK will cancel sessions and no sessions will be held at ROCK inside or outside.

If lightning is 8 miles or less away, all mounted Equine Assisted Services will become unmounted for the hour. At least one staff will be designated to monitor the radar. Alternative lessons will be conducted indoors during this time. Horses will be untacked and will stay in their stalls.

The decision to continue mounted activities during inclement weather or pending inclement weather when lightning is not present is made by the instructors and therapists who are teaching that hour with input from the Equine Team. Ground sessions will be offered at the discretion of the instructor or therapist.

If severe weather happens while you are at ROCK, the tack room is a category IV storm shelter. When the Emergency Broadcasting System indicates a severe storm warning, all people will be evacuated to the tack room for safety.

Your instructor, therapist, or the staff in the front office will call the number that has been designated to inform you of session cancellations. You may also call the office or contact your instructor or therapist if you have questions. You will not be charged for sessions canceled by ROCK.

## **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL CARE**

Participants should be fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to ROCK. In the event a participant needs to miss a session, please notify the office and your instructor or therapist.

If a participant has experienced an injury outside of ROCK, a doctor's note is needed before a participant will be allowed to return to riding.

If a participant requires medical care, ROCK will contact the participant's emergency contact directly. Please ensure that ROCK is kept informed of any changes in telephone numbers so that this service remains efficient.

If a participant needs emergency medical help, ROCK uses the services of Georgetown Emergency Medical Services. ROCK staff will have records of emergency medical conditions for participants.

Participants who know or believe they may be pregnant should report this to the Program Director and their instructor/therapist immediately. A participant who is 18 or

more weeks pregnant will not be allowed to ride ROCK horses, lead ROCK horses, get horses from the pastures or stalls or groom horses. Alternate lessons may be offered. It is required that participants who are less than 18 weeks pregnant discuss their ROCK activities with their physician and provide ROCK with a physician's statement releasing them to participate in Equine Assisted Services.

It is very helpful to keep in close contact with your instructor or therapist about any health problems a participant has however slight they may seem. Even small health concerns can affect a participant's behavior or performance. Being aware of any changes with a participant will help instructors or therapists meet the ongoing needs of the participant.

## **MEDICAL LEAVE**

Medical leave may be applied to participants who are absent due to a hospital stay or a significant medical issue. The staff along with the families will determine, on a case-by-case basis, if the absences are considered medical leave. Common illness and doctor's appointments are not considered medical leave. Participants may have up to 4 consecutive absences for medical leave during the year without losing their place in the riding schedule or being charged a session cancellation fee.

Long-term medical leave is when a participant is on medical leave for more than 4 consecutive sessions. After the 4th absence, the participant is offered 2 options:

- **Option 1:** The participant may request Medical Tuition Assistance to hold their spot in the riding schedule. This means that the participant is responsible for paying half of the tuition amount for each session missed over 4 sessions.
- **Option 2:** The participant may choose to give up their riding spot for the rest of the year so it can be offered to someone on the wait list. If they choose to give up their spot but plan to return to the program within the year, they are placed at the top of the wait list.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Communicable diseases such as scabies, head lice, ringworm of the scalp and impetigo are highly contagious and can cause problems in ROCK's environment. Participants with these conditions must notify their instructor or therapist and show proof of their treatment. In order to help prevent the spread of head lice, a lice spray is used on ROCK's helmets after each use.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO**

ROCK controls what is posted on the ROCK Facebook page and other ROCK media outlets. Only participants with a signed Photo/Video Release may have photographs or videos posted. Participants and families are asked verbal permission prior to posting items. The last name of a participant is not posted.

If taking pictures or video for personal use, please respect the privacy of other riders by not posting photographs or videos on any form of social media that includes other participants.

## **SIBLINGS**

If siblings are in attendance with parents of participants, parents are responsible for the direct supervision of these children at all times. Please keep in mind, noise and lots of activity or movement can distract riders, staff and horses from the optimal lesson.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS**

Personal pets, with the exception of service animals or service animals in training, are not allowed on the property without prior consent from the Chief Executive Officer. ROCK asks that service animals wear identifying tags, leashes and/or vests to notify others that it is a service animal.

## **REQUEST FOR RECORDS**

When there is a request for records, ROCK will provide copies of the records to the participant or guardian to forward to the requesting party. In the event that ROCK is asked to provide information regarding a participant, the original copy will be given directly to the participant or guardian to forward to the requesting agency and ROCK will send the agency a letter indicating the requested information has been given directly to the participant or guardian. Records will be given only when the financial account is current.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is mandatory that everyone complies with all posted safety rules and abides by all posted off-limit areas. ROCK is a no smoking facility and the use of drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden. No mistreatment, abuse, or suggested abuse of any person or animal will be tolerated. In accordance with Texas Penal Code 30.07 ROCK does not allow the open carry of weapons on the premises. ROCK reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the premises.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All staff, all volunteers and participants over 18 that have guardianship over themselves will be subject to background checks. If information is revealed that is a concern for ROCK, the CEO and staff will take appropriate action.

## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

ROCK does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion or disability. ROCK does not, and will not, tolerate any type of harassment of our employees, applicants for employment, our participants, their families, or our volunteers.

## **SOLICITATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

The solicitation of goods and services is not allowed at ROCK except during sanctioned events. While we understand that we have many talented persons and successful companies within our community, connections should not be made through solicitation. No printed information may be distributed to staff, participants, parents or volunteers.

## **RESOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICT AND CONCERNS**

The purpose of this policy is to provide individuals with an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. The Board encourages people to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate staff member or other administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution.

### **Level 1: Informal Conflict Resolution**

Participation in this informal resolution process shall be mandatory prior to the filing of a Level Two complaint. The Board expects that every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve a complaint at the informal level. At the informal resolution stage, there shall be an in-person meeting or telephone conference between the staff member and the individual to discuss the possible complaint. The staff member may obtain the assistance of other staff in an effort to reach an informal resolution of the complaint. If, however, it appears that an informal resolution is not possible, the staff member shall review this complaint policy with the participant or participant's guardian and provide a copy of the complaint process.

If the individual's concern is with a staff member and that individual is uncomfortable approaching the staff member, he/she may contact the Program Director, Kristin Witcher, at (512) 930-7625 ext. 315. She will act as a facilitator in the process.

### **Level 2: Written Complaint to the Chief Executive Officer**

When a ROCK participant or guardian of a participant has a complaint or concern regarding ROCK, the individual shall bring their complaint or concern in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. The complaint must be brought within 14 days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the concern. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The Chief Executive Officer must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The Chief Executive Officer must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision within 14 days of the Chief Executive Officer receipt of the complaint.

### **Level 3: Written Appeal to Board of Directors**

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the Chief Executive Officer's decision, the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to ROCK's

Board President within 14 days of receiving the Chief Executive Officer's decision. The complaint shall be addressed to the President of the Board, and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Chief Executive Officer, along with a copy of the Chief Executive Officer's decision. The President of the Board, upon reviewing the complaint will decide if the Executive Advisory Committee, the Executive Committee of the Board or the Board of Directors is needed to determine a resolution. The decision shall be based on a review of the record developed at the Chief Executive Officer's level. Any action regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The decision by the Board is final.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Following safety rules and procedures is required to protect the people, horses and equipment at ROCK. Training is provided to volunteers and staff. Follow all signs that are posted throughout ROCK stating safety rules. Violators of safety procedures will be talked to and asked to leave the property if the behavior continues.

## **FIRE/MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the facility. They are bright red and clearly labeled. If a fire is growing larger and cannot be contained, all people will move inside the Hero's Trail. First aid equipment is in the main office and in the tack room. The AED is located in the tack room and should be used only by a trained person. Therapists and instructors are trained in emergency medical treatment. Any injury to a person at ROCK should be reported to the main office as soon as possible, and an incident report completed. Should it be necessary to call for emergency medical assistance, ask that the responding agency turn off their siren when approaching ROCK to avoid any discomfort to the horses and riders.

ROCK maintains a phone service for emergency and business use. All phones have emergency information posted near the phone.

## **HEAT EXHAUSTION/STROKE**

Strenuous exercise during the hot summer months can cause dehydration in both humans and horses. Sweating, paleness, dizziness, severe headache, and nausea are observable symptoms of over-heating. The simplest prevention is to drink plenty of water. ROCK's temperature policy is that horses will not be ridden if the temperature + the humidity exceeds 150 degrees. ROCK will conduct un-mounted sessions based on the weather policy.

## **10) ROCK INFORMATION**

### **CONTACT AND OPERATING INFORMATION**

Location

2050 Rockride Lane (formerly CR 110)

Georgetown, TX 78626

**Mailing Address**

P.O. Box 2422

Georgetown, TX 78627

Phone: (512) 930-7625

Fax: (512) 863-9231

**Hours of Operation**

Sunday: Closed

Monday: 8am - 8pm

Tuesday: 8am - 9pm

Wednesday: 8am - 8pm

Thursday: 8am - 8pm

Friday: 8am - 5pm

## **CALENDAR**

ROCK offers several sessions, in summer, fall and spring. Breaks and holidays are included during this time. We closely follow the GISD calendar for most holidays and weather issues. For detailed information, you will find a copy of ROCK's calendar on the website.

## **COMMUNICATION**

ROCK is open to suggestions for improvement. The goal is to help every participant have a meaningful experience with the horse to facilitate independence and life skills. ROCK provides a variety of ways for all people involved at ROCK to give feedback. ROCK will communicate regularly with parents through electronic media, including the website and mass emails. Instructors, therapists, and staff will communicate with participants or guardians of participants on an individual basis using emails, in-person conversations, and phone calls. Google Survey is used throughout the year to gather anonymous evaluations of services provided by ROCK. Please participate in these opportunities to communicate how ROCK can better serve you and your family.

## **CONTACT NUMBERS**

ROCK works hard to communicate with participants or guardians of participants. The website has a section with names and titles. Business cards are in the front office with contact information for each staff member. There is also a Board of Directors email (board@rockride.org), if you need to contact the board directly. You may call the office to have them connect you with anyone you need to speak with at ROCK.

## **EMAIL**

For your convenience, each ROCK staff member has a ROCK email account. Please note that staff do not access email during instruction time and are not required to access

email after scheduled work hours. ROCK's policy is to reply to an email within 24 hours. Because of this, important information should be shared with your instructor or therapist via calling the front office and leaving a message or by texting the instructor or therapist directly.

### **SUGGESTION BOX**

A suggestion box is located near the Welcome Center and is checked by staff regularly. Suggestions or comments can be placed in the box at any time.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Please follow ROCK on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to see all that goes on at ROCK. You can also go to the website to keep up with ROCK or find answers to your questions.

### **ROCK'S HERD**

ROCK's therapy horses are carefully screened for health, training, and temperament before they are accepted into the program. After screening, a horse undergoes a 90-day trial period to determine if it is a good candidate for the program. After that time, the horse is either officially adopted to live and work at ROCK or returned to its original owners.

We care for our family of horses in the best way possible. They get their feed, farrier, and medical needs met. They also enjoy a high quality of life at ROCK. Please go to our website and check out our horse's page. There you will find names, pictures, and descriptions of the horses that serve at ROCK.

Horses are matched to participants based on several factors. The instructor or therapist takes into account the goals and needs of the participant. This is combined with their knowledge of the unique movement, size, and temperament of each horse. Finally, the horses' schedules and health are also factored in to select a horse that matches with a participant. Occasionally during the riding year, participants will have a change of horse due to any of the above factors. Please talk with your instructor or therapist if you have any questions.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Fulfilling the mission of ROCK would be impossible without the commitment and dedication of our volunteers. Not only does ROCK make a difference in the lives of our participants and their families, but it also makes a difference in the lives of our volunteers.

ROCK is always looking for dedicated volunteers! Volunteers are thoroughly trained in ROCK's procedures, safety practices, and handling of horses. Regardless of prior experience, anyone wishing to work with the horses or participants must be trained

and demonstrate competency in the area they wish to assist. Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 years of age.

If your company offers a Volunteer/Group Workday, contact the volunteer coordinator at [ROCKateers@rockride.org](mailto:ROCKateers@rockride.org) to schedule your group to volunteer at ROCK.

Steps to become a volunteer:

- Check the [rockride.org](http://rockride.org) website for upcoming volunteer training dates.
- Email the Volunteer Coordinator at [ROCKateers@rockride.org](mailto:ROCKateers@rockride.org) to register for training.
- Complete the volunteer application that will be emailed to you after you sign up for volunteer training.
- Once you have completed your training, you are welcome to begin volunteering for ROCK.

## USE OF FACILITIES

ROCK has an open and welcoming environment. If you are new to ROCK, please check in at the Welcome Center. Please help us take care of the facility for everyone by leaving areas the same or better than you found them.

Remember to be quiet while sessions are going on. Noise and lots of movement are disruptive and distracting to the horses and riders. ROCK has indoor and outdoor spaces available for participants, parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors to congregate away from the arena.

## BUILDING

ROCK is a handicapped-accessible facility. The facility was built and is maintained to continue compliance.

- **Patti Colbert Learning Center and Kitchen:** This is a large room used for meetings.
- **Cecil Autry Ham Family Room:** This room is a place for participants, families, and visitors to enjoy when at ROCK. The family room has a kitchen and bathroom for visitors and participants to use as well.
- **Welcome Center:** This is a large office area in the northeast corner at ROCK. It contains the front desk and many staff offices.
- **Offices:** Throughout the facility, there are staff offices. Please respect that space and only enter when invited by a staff member.
- **Lynne C. Christianson Therapy Gym:** This space contains therapy equipment for use during sessions. Helmets are also located here.

- **ROCKateer Lounge:** Volunteers that help out at ROCK use this room. It gives them a space to warm up or cool down based on the weather. It also gives them a place to rest or eat during downtime.
- **Tack Room:** The tack room stores equipment and tack for the horses and in the event of severe weather, the tack room is a category IV storm shelter.
- **Bathrooms:** Several public restrooms are located throughout the facility.
- **Horse Stalls:** The stalls are located on the south side of the building. Please read and respect all signage. This area is only for trained staff and volunteers.
- **Hoppe's Work Room:** This room provides storage for equipment.
- **Merlin Hoppe Arena:** This is the heart of ROCK. Only authorized staff, volunteers, and participants may enter the arena.

## DONATIONS

ROCK gratefully accepts donations. There are many ways to help. Some ideas are listed below. Donors will be provided a ROCK contribution form, which can be used as a donation receipt for tax purposes.

Ways to help:

- Sponsor a rider by contributing to the financial assistance fund.
- Join the Horseshoe Club where you can feed or care for the needs of a therapy horse through a monthly, yearly, or a one-time donation. Current sponsors and a list of needs are posted in the ROCKateer Lounge.
- Invest in the future of ROCK by helping us pay off the note on the adjacent 20 acres that were recently purchased.
- Make a donation in memory or honor of a special person, pet, or horse.
- Become a partner. There are many opportunities for you or your company to partner with ROCK. Contact us at 512-930-7625 to find out more information.
- Check if the company or corporation you work for matches donations. This is a great way to double your donation to ROCK.
- Amazon Smile. You can support ROCK by shopping at Amazon.com and selecting ROCK Ride On Center for Kids as your preferred charity. Visit Smile.Amazon.com. You use your regular account and get the same prices. No difference, except that 0.5% of your purchase is donated to ROCK. You can order on the site and have it sent directly to ROCK!
- ROCK Wish List. It doesn't matter what season it is, ROCK is always in need of items; be it for humans or horses! With approximately 30 horses, 350 +

participants, 350 volunteers, the arena, and the land, the list just seems to grow. Please call ROCK for more information.

- Donate a Horse. If you feel your horse is ready for a rewarding career as a therapy horse, we invite you to contact Equine Manager at 512-930-7625. ROCK is currently seeking middle-aged, more experienced horses for sale or donation.
  - Therapy Horse Criteria:
    - Calm, patient, and friendly temperament with excellent ground manners.
    - Sound in all three gaits (walk, trot, canter or walk, jog lope).
    - Symmetrical conformation with no injuries or vices.
    - Ideally between the ages of 8-and 17 years old.
    - Training in a Western or English discipline preferred.
    - Show ring experience is a plus.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Because ROCK's tuition and fees do not cover the expenses of the program, various fundraisers are conducted each year. Some events include the Barn Dance and Rider Cup Classic Golf Tournament. Information about the events will be available throughout the year in the Welcome Center or on the [rockride.org](http://rockride.org) website. Each event is a lot of fun and a great way to meet people involved at ROCK and in our community.

## **ENDOWMENT FUND**

The board of directors has established a separate endowment fund that will be used to maintain the facilities at ROCK, provide financial assistance and stabilize the financials at ROCK for years to come. Donations to this fund are tax-deductible. Contact Nancy Krennek at (512) 930-7625 or [nancy@rockride.org](mailto:nancy@rockride.org) if you have any questions.