



Freedom Ride Inc

3919 Bay Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32808
Phone: 407-293-0411 / Fax: 407-674-7575
Email: info@freedomride.com
Website: www.freedomride.com



Our Mission

Freedom Ride is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives and experiences of children and adults with disabilities in the Central Florida area through therapeutic horseback riding and related activities.

Student & Parent Handbook

Welcome to Freedom Ride, a non-profit 501c3 equine therapeutic riding program. We teach basic riding and horsemanship skills to riders ages 5 and up with special needs. At Freedom Ride, we are built on the conviction that we are not bound by our physical limitations. 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 Freedom Ride can give you 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.

Included on our website, www.freedomride.com, are the required rider registration forms necessary to begin your experience with Freedom Ride:

- **Participant Registration Information/Photo Release/Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment**
- **Participant Liability Release Form**
- **Statistical Survey-** Our lesson fees cover only a small portion of the estimated operating cost for each rider, Freedom Ride relies heavily on private donations, as well as grant and foundation gifts. Many foundations fund programs according to specific guidelines and this statistical information affords us the ability to properly and appropriately apply for much needed funds. Your cooperation is much appreciated and all information is kept completely confidential, separate from your application and is never used to determine Freedom Ride program eligibility.
- **Rider Questionnaire**
- **No Show/Cancellation Policy**
- **Medical Release Form-** This 2-page form **MUST** be completed, signed and dated by the doctor. Rider height and weight **MUST** be completed on the form. Riders cannot receive their new rider evaluation or participate in any mounted activity without this form.
This form **MUST** be updated annually for the rider to participate in lessons.

The rider forms must be updated annually. Please understand that this paperwork is necessary for Freedom Ride to remain in compliance with our accreditation standards and insurance requirements.

Program Information

New Rider Evaluation

A new rider evaluation is scheduled after receipt of completed participant registration forms, including the medical release that MUST be completed, signed and dated by the UideU·V doctor. A new rider evaluation is a very important part of our program. It allows our certified instructors to determine a base skill set level, abilities, appropriate hours, volunteer needs, and the most suitable lessons available on our schedule. It is only after we complete an evaluation that we can determine if there is a place on the schedule for the rider. There is a one-time \$65 evaluation fee.

Scheduling

Once an evaluation is complete, Freedom Ride 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. Participants at Freedom Ride are placed into the most appropriate class according to the rider's abilities and age.

If there is not an opening in a class that fits the rider's ability and scheduling needs, the rider will be placed on a waiting list. Freedom Ride will contact you during the session if a space becomes available, and you will also be on the mailing list for upcoming session registrations.

Therapeutic Riding Lessons

Lessons are taught by a PATH International certified therapeutic riding instructor and provide each rider a unique experience. 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 riders' specific needs and improve their 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 each session based upon input from the rider's parents, physician, and/or therapists.

Continued Participation in the Program

Ongoing assessments are done on the progress of riders. If a rider has been determined as not gaining benefit from riding therapy, they may be removed from a class and reassigned or removed from the program in order to make room for other riders who may be able to benefit from riding therapy. During these assessments we will also determine if a rider still requires our specialized services. If it is determined that a rider no longer requires our services, the rider will be promoted out of our program to allow for riders requiring it.

Billing and Payment Policy

Freedom Ride 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, grants and scholarships each year. The information below sets forth the billing and payment policies of Freedom Ride.

New Rider Evaluation Fee: There is a non-refundable fee of \$65 required at the time of your new rider evaluation.

Lesson Fees and Billing:

Please do not give payments to the instructors.

Lessons are \$50 per class, with an obligation to pay for all weeks in the session. Participants are billed in advance for all scheduled lessons within the session and must be paid in full prior to the first class. Weekly payment options are available but must be discussed with the Freedom Ride office administrator (amanda@freedomride.com) prior to the first class. Payment will still be required for all absences, unexcused and excused.

Checks and money orders should be made payable to Freedom Ride, Inc. Credit card use may be processed in the office or by using our website www.freedomride.com by clicking on the Student Payments tab all the way at the bottom of the page.

Scholarships:

Scholarships are available at a limited amount per session to those who may have difficulty paying for their riding lessons. An application must be completed prior to the first scheduled riding session and must include the first page of the most recent IRS income tax return, Schedule C or a copy of an SSI check. A sliding scale based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines will be used to determine the amount awarded for a lesson scholarship. Please note the terms listed are required for all participants receiving scholarship funds.

- Cancellation Policy: Participants receiving scholarships and have more than 1 no-show will be subject to forfeiting the scholarship and becoming ineligible for future scholarships.
- Participant survey forms provided to the email on file at the beginning and end of each session, Jan-May or Sept-Dec or both, if applicable.
- A letter of gratitude to donors, foundations, or grants that are providing scholarship funds. Link will be provided to email on file at the end of each session, May or Dec or both, if applicable.

Policies & Procedures

Rider Limitations:

-All Freedom Ride horses have height and weight carrying limits. These limits are in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of our horses and for everyone's safety. Weight limitations can vary from rider to rider and will be at the discretion of the instructor. 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 Medical Release Form. Should the physical condition of the rider change at any time, Freedom Ride is to be notified immediately and a new Medical Release Form must be completed and filed with the office. New/Additional forms can be found on our website under the Forms tab.

-Certain conditions require additional precautions to be taken when on or around horses and some conditions are contraindications to riding. Most activities have some type of precautions and guidelines for participation and horse 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.

Clothing:

-For both evaluations and lessons, riders should wear long pants such as riding breeches, jeans or leggings to prevent leg chafing. Participants may NOT wear skirts or dresses during their lesson at any time. Athletic shoes with a closed-toe and closed-back. Boots with a rounded, closed-toe and a small heel are the safest form of footwear and are preferred but not required

-It is recommended that riders learning advanced skills and participating in more independent activities wear paddock boots or tall boots. Riders 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. Participants without their own helmet will be provided by Freedom Ride.

Inclement Weather:

-Please do not assume that classes will be canceled due to bad weather.

Remember, this is Florida; it may be raining where you are, but clear at Freedom Ride

Rider Paperwork:

-All participant paperwork must be up-to-date and the medical release form must be updated annually. No participant will be allowed to ride without these forms properly completed, with original signatures, and turned in prior to class. Medical release forms must be completed in full with rider height, weight, diagnosis, doctor signature, and dated.

Safety Rules and Barn Policies

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. A parent or adult guardian must be present during the entire riding lesson for all participants under the age of 21.
3. A parent or adult guardian must be present during the entire riding lesson for all non-verbal participants.
4. Freedom Ride reserves the right to extend our supervision policy to other participants as deemed necessary.
5. **Participants and parents must wait at the gate, bleachers or picnic table until their lesson time. Instructors/volunteers will escort participants past the viewing area.**
6. Parents/Guardians and visitors are not permitted in the barn area, arena (unless asked to assist by instructor), or past the bleacher area unless escorted by instructor/volunteers.
7. A safety helmet must be worn at all times during lessons. Freedom Ride has helmets available for use in our barn, or you may purchase your own at a local tack shop.
8. **Participants, parents, visitors, volunteers and staff are REQUIRED to wear closed toe shoes when in the barn and around the horses at all times.** Individuals that arrive on property without the proper foot attire will not be allowed in the viewing area.
9. Remember this is Florida! Participants should be properly hydrated and protected from the elements. Cool wrap bands, sunglasses, jackets, etc. can be worn by the participant as long as they do not prevent lesson activities.
10. At Freedom Ride we DO NOT hand feed our horses. If a participant wishes to bring treats, they may give them to the horse in a bucket with permission from their instructor and within the confines of their season time.
11. There are no pets allowed on Freedom Ride property. Emotional support animals are not permitted. Service dogs are permitted in accordance with ADA guidelines.
12. Any bleeding or open sores must be covered with a bandage, or the participant cannot attend that session.
13. Please be sure to advise the instructor of any medical changes such as recent seizures or illness that may affect their ability to participate.
14. We ask that parents/guardians please refrain from coaching participants from the sidelines during their sessions. It is important their focus remains on the instructor and assisting volunteers.
15. 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 around the riding arena, barn or parking lot, etc. Horses get scared of strange noises and sights. Any visitors that are causing a safety hazard will be asked to leave the premises.
16. Our instructors are always available to answer any questions you have regarding you or participants. 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.
18. All phones and other electronic devices on our premises must be put on *SILENT*. This is a distraction to our sessions and can potentially frighten the horses.
19. **ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING ALLOWED AT THE FREEDOM RIDE FACILITY.**
20. Abusive behavior, lack of respect for instructors, volunteers, staff, and horses, or any violation of Freedom Ride rules will result in immediate dismissal from the property.

Freedom Ride No-Show and Cancellation Policies

We are glad you have decided to participate in our programs. We ask that you adhere to the following policies in order for us to offer the best quality programs possible.

- 1) Please arrive five minutes before your scheduled session time in order to process payment.
***Riders Only:** If you are ten minutes late (or more) then you will not be riding as this disrupts the other students and instructors.
***Mental Wellness Only:** If you are more than 10 minutes late, it is your instructor's discretion whether to extend the session time or end on time.
Participants will be considered a 'No Show' if they have not arrived and have not communicated within 10 minutes of the scheduled session start time.
- 2) Please give 24 hour notice if you will not be here by calling 407-293-0411. If nobody answers please leave a message. Be aware our instructors do not have time to check their cell phones during sessions so a message at the office is necessary.
- 3) In case of sudden illness, the participant or parent/guardian/caregiver should call as soon as it is apparent they will not be able to attend due to illness and no less than 15 mins prior to session time.
- 4) Excessive absences (3 or more) or no-shows (more than 1) will disqualify the participant from the remainder of the session to make sure other clients on the waiting list have an opportunity to receive services.

Scholarships Only: Clients who are receiving scholarships and have more than 1 no-show will be subject to forfeiting the scholarship and becoming ineligible for future scholarships.

- 6) There will be NO REFUNDS for missed classes. Payment for the session is expected regardless of absences and no-shows.
- 7) If Freedom Ride must cancel a class due to weather or other circumstances, we will make every attempt to schedule a make-up class at the end of the session. If our calendar does not allow for a make-up class, the participant will receive a credit for the canceled class. Due to our schedule, it is not possible to schedule individual make-up classes for absences and no-shows.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Participant/Parent/Legal Guardian/Caregiver

Printed Name: _____

Freedom Ride Session Calendar *(subject to change)*

Session 1 January - May 15 weeks
Session 2 September - December 16 weeks

The staff and volunteers at Freedom Ride want to make your visits with us enjoyable, fun and rewarding. Please, give us feedback; let us know how we are doing and what we can do to you or your child's experiences with us.

Freedom Ride
3919 Bay Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32808
Office: 407-293-0411 Fax 407-674-7575
www.freedomride.com



Please sign and detach this portion to return with your registration forms - Thank You.

By signing below, I agree that I have read and understand the above written policies and procedures.

Participant Name:

Please Print _____

Signature: _____

Participant, Parent or Legal Guardian

Date: _____