

Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center Rider Eligibility Guidelines

Although SHHRC makes every effort to accommodate every person who applies to ride with our program, it is not always possible due to the limitations of our horses and the facility. Be aware that there are several factors used in determining if an individual is appropriate to participate in SHHRC's programs. These include, but are not limited to, the availability of an appropriate horse, as well as a sufficient number of qualified volunteers and staff. We would like you to be aware of the following:

AGE

Participants in the therapeutic riding program must be at least five years of age. Participants in the Hippotherapy program must be at least two years of age.

WEIGHT LIMIT

As a guideline, our current general weight limit is 200 pounds. However, each individual horse has a pre-determined limit as to the total weight he/she can carry safely. The total weight is the weight of the rider plus the weight of the equipment. These limits are determined by a variety of factors and are evaluated and updated by a supervising veterinarian.

PHYSICIANS STATEMENT

We **cannot** allow any person to ride without a signed and dated statement from a physician stating that it is safe for that person to do so.

PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

Be aware that there are existing precautions and contraindications to therapeutic riding and Hippotherapy.

BEHAVIOR

Disruptive, inappropriate or unsafe behaviors, or any condition where the client is dangerous to himself or to others may be considered a contraindication to horseback riding.

EVALUATION

A SHHRC Instructor and/or Therapist will evaluate every potential client on a one-to-one basis. If, in the opinion of the Instructor and/or the Therapist it is not advisable for the client to ride, we will follow their recommendation. Certain medical conditions are a contraindication to horseback riding.

RE-EVALUATION

Under certain circumstances, a rider's condition may change leading to an unacceptable level of risk. In this case, the rider is asked to withdraw from lessons until the condition is stabilized. Riding may be resumed when written verification from the attending physician or therapist states that it is safe to do so. In certain situations it may not be advisable for the client to return to riding.

Thank you for your understanding of these guidelines. Our goal is to provide the safest program possible that is also challenging and enjoyable for all participants. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Program Director or Executive Director.