



Loudoun Therapeutic Riding

Center Information Policies & Procedures 2024

Welcome! Loudoun Therapeutic Riding (LTR) has developed the following policies for the 2024 season.

As a Premier Accredited Center (PAC) through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH Intl.), LTR abides by all Standards, Guidelines, Policies (including Precautions and Contraindications) and the Code of Ethics as set forth in the PATH Intl. Standards for Certification & Accreditation Manual.

Our Mission: LTR embraces the power of the horse, through Equine-assisted Services, to promote well-being and community inclusion for people with physical, intellectual, and mental health challenges.

Our Vision: A community where everyone has equal and immediate access to the power of horse-assisted services and the lifelong benefits this provides to individuals, families, and their networks. This is achieved through a dynamic and harmonious relationship between people and horses.

Our Core Values: *Love, Trust, Respect*

Our Policy Regarding Participation in/Discharge from Equine-assisted Services: Recognizing that equine related activities hold inherent risks. All prospective participants will be evaluated by a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (CTRI) to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. In compliance with PATH Intl. guidelines/Accreditation Standards and LTR policy, the following criteria must be met:

- Participants for therapeutic (adaptive) riding, carriage driving, or ground lessons must be at least 4 years of age, and at least 2 years of age for physical therapy (incorporating hippotherapy as a treatment tool). Hippotherapy is conducted by a licensed therapist only. See separate policy on page 3.
- Participant/parent/guardian/volunteer/staff must complete, sign (e-signatures accepted), and date all center paperwork including releases, prior to participation. Forms can be found online at ltrf.org. These forms must be updated annually. Note: Complete paperwork, containing all required signatures must be received and approved by LTR before the first day of an activity or lesson. Participants who turn in paperwork on the first day of lessons may not be allowed to participate that week. Lessons will be forfeited if paperwork is late or incomplete.
- Non-Discrimination Policy: LTR considers/accepts participants or volunteers regardless of income, race, color, nationality, religion, ethnic origin, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Eligibility: EAS (Equine-assisted Services) may not be suitable for all individuals with or without disabilities. Upon reviewing completed paperwork and evaluating prospective participants, the LTR Program Director/LTR Staff will decide regarding participation in Equine-assisted Learning and Horsemanship services. Returning participants will be re-evaluated annually or as necessary for changes in medical, physical, cognitive and behavioral status, and LTR must be notified of any changes. Our professional staff will assess participant involvement with a risk/benefit analysis (benefit to participant exceeds any potential risk associated with EAS) during an intake evaluation taking into consideration PATH Intl. Precautions and Contraindications provided in the PATH Intl. Standards and Accreditation Manual.

Requirements for EAS include, but are not limited to:

- Physically able to sit independently, symmetrically with torso upright and legs astride the horse during dynamic movement; this includes adequate head and neck control to maintain proper alignment.
- Tolerate a safety helmet approved for equestrian use.
- Behave in a manner that is safe for self, horses and others.
- Ability to accommodate the movement of the horse without pain or risk of harm.

LTR instructors/staff will make final determination for participation based on the intake evaluation and on available resources such as: class availability, volunteer availability, and instructor expertise or horse suitability.

If an individual is discharged from participation, LTR will provide a reason for discharge. Reasons for discharge might include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participant progresses to a level of skill such that they may be better served by a riding school for individuals without disabilities or special needs.
- Residents of North Spring Behavioral Healthcare are discharged from the facility.
- Loudoun County Public School class participants move schools, or the class is discontinued.
- Participant's mobility or weight prevents center personnel from serving client safely.
- Participant's status or behavior becomes a threat to the safety of self, horses or others.
- Center does not have suitable horse or pony for participant.
- Center personnel cannot safely manage the participant in any situation including an emergency dismount or transfer from wheelchair or ramp/block.

Alternatives to mounted lessons may be offered to individuals who may not be best served by therapeutic riding. These might include participating in ground lessons, HorsePower Social Hour, barn activities or therapeutic (adaptive) driving. LTR reserves the right to discontinue an individual's participation in any program should it be deemed to be in the best interest of either the participant or LTR.

Our Center Services: Partnering with our horses, services & programs are developed to foster a community environment that promotes learning, inclusion, respect & independence.

- **Therapeutic (adaptive) Riding** (taught or supervised by PATH Intl. CTRI) - Student goals include grooming, horsemanship, tacking skills (barn lesson), and horseback riding skills.
- **Therapeutic (adaptive) Carriage Driving** (all driving lessons taught by a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Driving Instructor) - Student goals include grooming, horsemanship, harnessing and carriage driving skills.
- **Unmounted Horsemanship** – Includes HorsePower Social Hour, ground lessons in grooming, horse care and behavior, stable management, horsemanship, etc. (supervised by PATH Intl. CTRI or ESMHL) These lessons or sessions typically take place in the barn and sometimes the arena.
- **Learning** (Equine-assisted Learning in Education, Organizations or Personal Development) – periodically provided by appropriately credentialed professionals.
- **Physical, occupational and speech therapy** - treatments are provided by independent licensed PT, OT and SLP trained in the use of the movement of the horse as a treatment tool with a PATH

Intl. CTRI present. Patients must be at least 2 years old. Goals are determined by therapist's treatment plan. Eligibility, fees, goals, policies, records for therapy sessions are determined/managed directly by the therapist.

- **PATH Intl. Equine Services for Heroes** – Program serving veterans and/or their family members and may include riding, carriage driving or ground lessons. (Conducted by Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors.)
- **Special group tours or higher education practicums/modules** – these are un-mounted sessions supervised by a CTRI/LTR staff member for the purpose of providing educational opportunities to students or individuals requiring training in horse handling, first aid, horsemanship or Equine-assisted Services in general. LTR gratefully accepts monetary donations for this service.
- **HorsePower Social Hour** – combines hands-on farm and horse activities with a wellness theme that taps into the benefits of spending time with horses. (Conducted by a CTRI or ESMHL)
- **Hippotherapy** – Physical or speech therapy incorporating equine movement as part of the client's plan of care. This service is coordinated by a licensed therapist/LTR contractor.

Lesson Description

All equine-assisted services are planned for safety and therapeutic benefit with the individual's educational, physical, social, emotional and/or recreational goals in mind. Participants with similar goals may be grouped together. Lessons may include warm-up exercises, skill development, activities or games to reinforce goals, and trail rides. Some lessons/activities may take place in the barn or on the ground, thus are unmounted. Upon arrival for a lesson or session, students should wait in the designated seating area of the breezeway in the main entrance. A staff member will greet students before moving into the barn aisle. This is for the safety of humans and equines.

Classes may be individual (up to 30-40 minutes) or group (up to 60 minutes) depending on participant needs and schedule availability. Spring, summer and fall sessions are typically 8-12 weeks in length. Evening sessions during the fall will be scheduled according to enrollment, daylight and may vary in length. Fees will be adjusted accordingly.

Current session schedule: winter (6-8 weeks), spring (12 weeks), summer (10 weeks), and fall (12 weeks).

Weight Considerations: Weight is generally limited to 185 pounds for adaptive riding, but decisions regarding participation will be based on current resources including the availability of a suitable horse relative to the height, cognition, balance and/or behavior of the participant. The results of a risk/benefit analysis will also be considered. Due to the nature of therapeutic (adaptive) riding, therapeutic (adaptive) driving and associated activities, it may be deemed inappropriate for some individuals.

Equine-assisted services are contraindicated:

- 1) If staff/volunteers are unable to safely manage the participant in any situation, including an emergency dismount or transfer from a wheelchair or mounting ramp.
- 2) If staff/volunteers cannot manage participant behaviors (including any mal-adaptive or extreme behaviors) with verbal prompts and/or light touch.
- 3) If safety, comfort or well-being of staff, volunteers or the horse is compromised in any way for any reason.
- 4) If medically inappropriate based on PATH Intl. guidelines, precautions, contraindications.



Fee Schedule (New for 2024*)

Therapeutic Riding, Driving and EAS

Session Fees

\$900 (flat fee/12 weeks/half hour lessons)

\$750 (flat fee/10 weeks/half hour lessons)

Per Lesson (winter session, other organization or county-funded services)

\$75 per group lesson or half-hour private lesson

\$95 per one-hour private lesson (\$1140 flat fee/12 weeks)

North Spring Behavioral Healthcare

\$115 per student/two-hour group

Payment is due prior to the start of each session with registration unless otherwise specified or the individual participates through a collaborative program. Fees are subject to change, invoices are sent by email upon registration, and participants may not carry a fee balance forward to the next session. The actual cost per student is approximately \$1,800 per session, however participants are asked to pay only a portion of this amount. See Fee Assistance for more information in cases of financial hardship. Fees for multiple family members will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Hippotherapy services are billed by the therapist.

Fee Assistance

Our policy at Loudoun Therapeutic Riding is never to turn anyone away because of the inability to pay session fees. To help ensure this, our session fees are reduced by 77% from their actual cost for every participant. Veterans are provided services without charge to honor service to our country. Family members are eligible for one session (spring, summer, fall) at no direct cost to the veteran or family. LTR is extremely thankful that fees for veterans and reduced fees for other participants are made possible by gifts and grants from Loudoun County, individuals, businesses and corporations, and foundations. Thanks to the generosity of these donors, we can provide additional fee assistance beyond the 77% to a limited number of participants. New participants (began services during or after 2023) may receive up to a 50% reduction in fees.

In 2021, we made several changes to our application for those seeking the additional fee assistance. These changes helped us comply with the requirements of some of these grants and gifts. Again, this year, you will fill out the application once per year at the start of your first session of the year. Once your fee reduction is determined, it will be applied for the entire year.

Fee assistance applications must be submitted before you are invoiced. *This was a change from previous years when you could apply for assistance after you received your invoice.* If your circumstances change, please fill out a new application for consideration at the time you sign up for a new session. If you no longer need fee assistance, please notify us.

Dress code: ASTM/SEI approved helmets must be worn while mounted or driving and will be provided, if necessary. LTR helmets are periodically sanitized. If purchasing your own helmet, make sure that it is ASTM/SEI certified for horseback riding. LTR strongly recommends each participant have their own helmet. Helmets must be replaced 5 years from the date of manufacture. Participants should wear long



pants (no shorts!) and sturdy shoes with a ¼” heel or riding boots. NO sandals, and sneakers are not recommended but permitted if using safety stirrups. All LTR participants using English saddles will use safety stirrups. Participants using a western saddle must wear appropriate paddock shoe/boot with ¼” heel.

Instructor Training/Mentorship: LTR is committed to providing education and training to individuals interested in Equine-assisted Services. LTR may offer a limited number of mentorship opportunities each year to qualified individuals seeking PATH Intl. Instructor Certification. There are classes during each session that may be taught by one of these candidates. All lessons are directly supervised by a PATH Intl. driving instructor, a CTRI (Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor) or an ESMHL (Equine Specialist in Mental Health & Learning). There are separate policies regarding mentoring and are available upon request.

Board of Directors: LTR is governed by a voluntary board of directors. The Board meets regularly at specified locations. Please contact us if you would like to serve on the board or are interested in center development: info@ltrf.org.

Cancellations: LTR may cancel riding in the event of extreme weather in consideration of all center personnel, participants, parents and equines (e.g., thunderstorms, heat > 95°/weather advisories, extreme cold < 30°, etc.). We generally follow Loudoun County Public School’s cancellation policy. LTR will attempt to reach participants by phone/email in the event of a cancellation. If a participant must cancel, please send an email to kblaine@ltrf.org or call as soon as possible, so that our volunteers/horses will not be waiting. Two “no shows” in a session may result in removal from that session with no refund of fees. LTR reserves the right to cancel lessons in the event the safety of all personnel, participants and horses is compromised. We will attempt to notify participants of a cancellation at least 2 hours prior to cancellation. Lessons canceled by LTR may or may not be made up depending on available resources, i.e. barn, aisle or arena space, instructor and/or volunteer staff.

Participant cancellation: Please contact us ASAP if you are unable to attend your lesson. Call us at 703-771-2689 to leave a message or email kblaine@ltrf.org. You may check the LTR Facebook page for cancellation information.

Late Arrivals: To conduct a beneficial and productive group lesson, students arriving late (after the gate is closed and all riders are mounted) will not be mounted. If mounting is still in progress, you will be permitted to participate in the lesson. Final decisions will be left to the discretion of the instructor in the case of a private lesson. Lessons will be forfeited if volunteers have returned the horse to the barn.

Refund/Make-up policy: Regular attendance is expected of participants. In the event LTR must cancel a lesson we will attempt to schedule a make-up class at the end of the session during the designated make-up week. The session charge is a flat fee, is non-refundable and will not carry over to the next session. LTR cannot offer refunds or make up classes for lessons missed due to incomplete paperwork, vacations, illness, or scheduling conflicts on the part of participants or for lessons that we are unable to re-schedule within the specified makeup periods. Lesson fees cover only a small part of operating expenses. No account balance may be carried into the next session.

Confidentiality: Any information pertaining to LTR participants must be held in strict confidentiality. It is critical that we respect the privacy of each participant and their families. This is considered one of the most important responsibilities of our staff and volunteers. Complete written policy is described in the



PATH Intl. Standards for Certification & Accreditation Manual per the Volunteer Handbook containing center information. All records are securely stored indefinitely in the LTR office both physically and electronically via secure web-based platform. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from center activities. All information regarding participants is confidential and will not be shared with outside sources unless the participant/participant's guardian requests this information in writing. A Release of Information form is available in the event participants request that personal information be shared.

Communication: LTR periodically sends an electronic newsletter via email. The center website will also contain important information including a calendar of events. The address is www.ltrf.org. If you prefer a personal consultation, please contact the office at info@ltrf.org.

Spectators and Guests: Siblings, parents, guests should wait in areas designated by the instructors so that lessons are not disrupted. Children may not climb on the tables near the arenas, and parents/caregivers are responsible for monitoring siblings, friends and other family members during sessions. Any staff, participant, parent, sibling, or volunteer who demonstrates behavior deemed inappropriate, disruptive or unsafe by any LTR Instructor may be asked to leave the premises and dismissed permanently from center activities. No one is allowed in the barn/paddock areas unless accompanied by LTR staff or designated trained volunteer. Guests/visitors are welcome by appointment.

Parking – in front of main barn. Accessible parking is available.

Telephone – Landline phone is in the tack room.

Restroom Facilities – located in barn or portable (accessible) restrooms in parking lot.

Volunteer Opportunities: Volunteers are the backbone of this center! If you or someone you know would like to assist with lessons, fund-raising, center development, office work, or even doing barn chores please contact our volunteer coordinator at 703-771-2689 or by email at volunteer@ltrf.org. Parents/caregivers of participants often volunteer during their child's lesson time. However, for the most beneficial experience we may ask that parents assist students other than their own children.

Attending a volunteer orientation is required. Volunteer orientation is held 3-4 times each year: one at the beginning of each session (spring, summer, fall) or as needed. Contact us for more information regarding each training session date or consult the annual calendar on our website. Orientation and training are required and are ongoing during each session. Schooling of center horses by experienced and screened riders/carriage drivers is scheduled by the Director of Equine Operations as needed. See our Center Information Manual for detailed information outlining opportunities to support LTR.

Safety and First Aid: The safety of all center participants, staff, & volunteers is paramount. All LTR Certified Instructors are trained in CPR/First Aid/AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and at least one certified instructor, who is in charge during an emergency, is onsite during all center activities. LTR has an AED that is accessible in main barn aisle by tack room along with the Human First Aid Kit**In an emergency an LTR instructor will give directions based on the LTR Risk Management Plan and Emergency Procedures – call 911 as necessary. Emergency numbers are posted in the barn by the tack room landline phone. Complete written policies are in the PATH Intl. Standards for Certification & Accreditation Manual and are reviewed during all volunteer orientation sessions. If you are directed to gather in an indoor area, the tack room is the designated place. **OTHER: SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE: Dial 988 or 800-273-8255. If you are in crisis, you have options.**



Waiting List: Due to the numbers of individuals seeking services LTR may carry a waiting list. Wait times vary depending on resources such as: instructor expertise/availability, horse suitability, participant availability and/or need for private instruction. Please contact us for more information or to request a visit.

Competitions: There may be limited numbers of competition opportunities (horse shows). Please contact us for more information and a copy of our written competition policies.

LTR Equines: The well-being of our horses and ponies is of utmost importance to our center. Written policies regarding their care are available in our PATH Intl. Standards for Accreditation Manual.

Virginia Equine Liability Act: per Release of Liability Waiver: *It is expressly agreed by Rider and any parent or guardian whose signature appears on this document that this Agreement shall be governed and construed as being sufficient to satisfy the assumption of risk and waiver requirements necessary to relieve equine activity sponsors and equine professionals from liability under the Virginia Equine Liability Act (Virginia Code Section 3.2-6200 et seq.), and that LTRF, and all of its agents, directors, officers, shareholders, employees, volunteers, consultants, partners, successor and assigns are covered by the provisions of the Virginia Equine Liability Act (Virginia Code Section 3.2- 6200 et seq.). This Agreement shall be governed and construed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, regardless of where any accident, damage, loss, injury, illness or death shall occur. In the event that any portion of this Agreement shall be declared unenforceable, such declaration shall not affect the remaining terms of this Agreement, which shall survive intact.*

Address: 14490 Berlin Tpke, Lovettsville, VA 20180

Directions: From Leesburg, take exit Route 9 westbound. At the intersection with Route 287 (Berlin Tpke) turn right; proceed 2.2 miles to right turn into farm. From Route 9 West: Proceed east on Route 9 to intersection with Route 287 (Berlin Tpke), turn left, proceed 2.2 miles to right turn into farm.

LTR is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization and a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. You can learn more about Equine-assisted Services (EAS) at www.pathintl.org. LTR is also a member center of the Therapeutic Riding Association of Virginia (TRAV) www.travinc.org, American Hippotherapy Association, & Loudoun County Equine Alliance.

STAFF

Laura Smith, Executive Director lsmith@ltrf.org

Kathy Blaine, Program Director kblaine@ltrf.org

Tatiana Williams, Administrative Services Officer tatiana@ltrf.org

Debbie Gerbich, Lead Instructor, Director of Equine Operations teachyou@ltrf.org

Heather Payne, Assistant Program Director, Lesson Volunteer Coordinator volunteer@ltrf.org

Caitlin Taft, Instructor & Facilities Manager, caitlin@ltrf.org

Bookkeeper/Administration bookkeeper@ltrf.org

Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors (CTRI): Kathy Blaine, Debbie Gerbich, Mary Jo Beckman (Master Instructor & PATH Intl. Certified Driving Instructor), Heather Payne, Caitlin Taft, Alison Duvall, Jennifer Johnson (Level 1 Driving Instructor)

Equine Specialist in Mental Health & Learning (ESMHL): Kathy Blaine, Sue Mitchell, Elena Fugate





Equine Care Staff: Elena Fugate, Mariel Cline

Volunteer Facilities Maintenance: Allan Leach

Therapists: Catherine Wycoff, PT, DPT, HPCS, CTRI; Cathy Coleman, SLP

The following policies and rules apply to all staff, participants, volunteers, and visitors:

- All staff, participants, and volunteers must have completed, signed, dated, current paperwork on file that is updated annually.
- All staff, volunteers, participants and guests will treat one another with kindness and respect. No abusive, threatening or violent behavior will be tolerated on the premises.
- Behavior deemed inappropriate by LTR staff may result in removal from the premises and dismissal from center activities permanently.
- Horses must be treated with kindness and respect by using gentle hands and feet.
- All volunteers must use the “Buddy System” (2 people approved by instructor) to turn out/bring in horses to/from fields or paddocks. No volunteer should enter a field or paddock alone.
- Never tie horses/ponies to fence boards or other movable objects, and never tie by using the lead rope attached to the bridle. Please tie using safety halters only with a break-away feature. Consult a staff member about appropriate methods for tying horses. Never wrap lead rope around hand or body.
- Follow tacking procedures carefully: staff only bridle horses, do not leave saddle on horse without securing girth, keep reins from touching ground, bring concerns regarding tack (including worn equipment) to staff’s attention, do not kneel, or sit on ground near horse while grooming/tacking. Use crossties when directed by staff.
- All participants/personnel must wear ASTM/SEI approved helmets while mounted or driving. This may be provided if needed.
- All participants will use safety stirrups and/or have appropriate hard-soled shoe with ¼” heel. No sandals in the barn. Shorts or sneakers are not recommended.
- No participant (or participant’s family member/caregiver) or guest is permitted in stalls, or barn area, including paddocks, unless a staff member or trained volunteer is present.
- No one may feed horses from their hands. All feeding, petting, and horse handling must be supervised by a staff member. Use a “goodie bowl” or bucket to feed treats.
- A staff member/credentialed instructor must be present for any program activity.
- Alcohol misuse and/or illegal drug use is strictly prohibited on the premises. No weapons, firearms permitted. Failure to comply may result in removal from all center activities.
- Absolutely NO smoking in or around the barn areas.
- No running in barn areas or around horses.
- No pets in barn, arenas or LTR activity areas please. Service dogs permitted on a leash or under the control of owner/handler.
- Barn areas and aisle ways must be kept clear and free of obstructions.
- Siblings, guests, family members must be supervised at all times. No climbing on picnic tables.



- **All incidents, accidents, injuries, occurrences or hazardous conditions should be reported immediately to an LTR staff member. An occurrence/incident report must be filed and reviewed by the Program Director.**
- **No photography or videography without permission of LTR staff member.**
- **Only LTR staff may operate center equipment: e.g. tractor, Gator, mower**
- **LTR staff ONLY in the upstairs area and the hay barn.**

Public Health Emergency Procedures and Policies:

- Loudoun Therapeutic Riding will follow all procedures and policies as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Loudoun County and recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), however final decisions regarding the safety of participants, horses, volunteers, staff and guests rest with LTR.
- Volunteers, participants and staff will follow all rules for personal hygiene, personal safety and public safety as required by Loudoun Therapeutic Riding for the safety of Participants, Volunteers, Guests and Staff.
- Volunteers, Staff and Participants will complete any additional paperwork as requested by Loudoun Therapeutic Riding.
- LTR will keep Volunteers and Participants informed regarding changes or updates to procedures and policies. Separate policies/procedures may be necessary and will be shared with the LTR community.

Thank you for reviewing these policies which have been developed to provide a positive, safe and enjoyable environment for all members of the LTR community. If you have concerns, questions or comments please call 703-771-2689, or email the office - info@ltrf.org

**Loudoun Therapeutic Riding
14490 Berlin Turnpike
Lovettsville, VA 20180**

Phone: (703) 771-2689

Email: info@ltrf.org

Website: ltrf.org

