Windsor-Essex Therapeutic Riding Association

Program Policies 2026/2027

Overview of Therapeutic Equine Programs for Clients, Parents, and Caregivers

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- The Windsor – Essex Therapeutic Riding Association (WETRA) is a charitable, non-profit organization that provides therapeutic horseback riding as well as unmounted programming.
- WETRA's therapeutic equine programs consist of different types of horse related activities, with varying goals depending on the needs of the individual participants.
- WETRA will make every effort to accommodate scheduling requests; however, all changes are subject to program capacity and availability and cannot be guaranteed.

Payment, Refunds & Cancellation Policies

- **Payment in Full:** Full payment must be received before a participant's first scheduled program date to secure their spot.
- **After-Hours Drop-Off:** If you are unable to visit the farm during regular office hours, a night

deposit box is available outside the main entrance. Online payments can also be made at www.wetra.ca/make-payment or by e-transfer to accounting@wetra.ca, please mention riders name and what it pertains to in the comment box if you pay by e-transfer.

- **Physician's Referral & Medical Information:** Physician's referral forms must be completed and signed every two years. It is the responsibility of the participant or their parent/guardian to ensure all medical information, emergency contacts, and relevant support needs are accurately disclosed and kept up to date. For the safety and therapeutic benefit of all participants, individuals with expired or incomplete required paperwork will not be permitted to participate in mounted activities.
- **Cheque Payments:** Cheques must be made payable to WETRA and may be post-dated to the corresponding term payment date. If a cheque is returned due to insufficient funds or does not clear, replacement payment must be received within three business days.
- **Outstanding Balances:** All outstanding balances must be paid in full before a participant can be assigned a time slot for the next term. Any existing credits should be reflected on your account statement.
- **Alternate Funding:** WETRA is unable to submit insurance claims for program fees. However, if you receive funding through programs such as

Jumpstart, Pathway to Potential, or rider scholarship programs, arrangements may be discussed with the Accounting Administrator before the payment deadline.

Scheduling & Program Availability

- **Attendance Confirmation & Schedule Changes:** WETRA serves over 120 participants across its programs. To ensure fair scheduling and allow us to accommodate as many families as possible, families are required to confirm their participant's attendance with the Program Manager by emailing denica@wetra.ca or calling the office at 519-726-7682. Any requests for day or time changes must also be submitted during the designated confirmation weeks:

  Fall Session: First week of August

  Winter Session: First week of December

  Spring Session: First week of March

- WETRA will make every effort to accommodate scheduling requests; however, all changes are subject to program capacity and availability and cannot be guaranteed.
- **Please note:** Failure to confirm attendance or submit requests for scheduling changes within the designated confirmation week may result in the loss of the participant's current spot. If a

spot is forfeited, WETRA cannot guarantee that an alternative day or time will be available.

Refunds, Withdrawals & Missed Lessons

WETRA invests considerable time, staffing, and resources into preparing for each program session. As a result, the following refund policies apply:

- **Once a session has commenced, refunds will not be issued** for missed lessons due to vacations, personal scheduling conflicts, illness, incomplete or missing registration or medical paperwork, or participant/family cancellations and absences.
- **Voluntary Withdrawal:** If a participant chooses to withdraw after the session has begun for personal reasons, scheduling conflicts, or circumstances beyond WETRA's control, no refund or credit will be issued for the remaining lessons.
- **Medical Withdrawal:** If a participant is unable to continue due to documented medical reasons, a refund will be issued for the remaining unused lessons. Medical documentation may be required.
- **Withdrawal Before the Session Begins:** Participants who withdraw before the start of the term will receive a refund.

- Families are asked to notify the Program Manager as soon as possible if they need to withdraw from a program.

Credits & Make-Up Lessons

- Credits will only be issued when a lesson is cancelled due to circumstances directly attributable to WETRA.
- Due to scheduling, staffing requirements, and program capacity, WETRA does not offer make-up lessons.
- No credits or refunds will be provided for lessons missed or cancelled due to circumstances outside WETRA's control, except in the case of an approved medical withdrawal as outlined above.

Attendance & Punctuality

- Participants are expected to arrive **10 minutes before their scheduled lesson** to allow adequate time for preparation.
- Riders arriving after the scheduled start time are not guaranteed to be mounted. Mounting late arrivals is at the discretion of the instructor.
- Riders arriving more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time will not be mounted.
- **Two no-call/no-shows within one session** will result in removal from the program without a refund.
- If you are unable to attend a scheduled lesson, please call WETRA as soon as possible. While 24

hours' notice is appreciated, we understand that last-minute situations can arise. For after-hours cancellations, please leave a voicemail so staff can be notified.

Lesson Cancellations & Alternative Programming

Lessons may be cancelled or modified due to circumstances affecting the safety or welfare of participants, horses, volunteers, and instructors. These circumstances may include:

- Hazardous driving conditions.
- Extremely hot or cold weather.
- Power outages or facility-related issues.
- Horse health or welfare concerns.
- Severe weather or other unsafe conditions.

Whenever possible, WETRA will make reasonable efforts to provide alternative horse-related programming in place of a mounted lesson. These unmounted activities offer valuable opportunities to develop horsemanship skills, learn about horse care, and build relationships with the horses.

Please note: Participation in alternative programming does not qualify for a refund or credit, as the lesson and educational experience are still being provided.

Arrival & Dismissal Policy

- No child can be left unattended before or after class.

Safety

- Safety is our number one priority at WETRA. We do everything possible to ensure the safety of the riders, volunteers, staff, and horses. We are dependent on volunteers to run classes safely. If there are insufficient volunteers for any given class, the following may occur:

A. Parents, caregivers, or friends may be asked to assist as side walkers. So please always come prepared with closed-toed shoes.
B. The class will be split according to the number of volunteers present.
C. The class will be held in the form of alternate equestrian activities. Riders will not ride if adequate help is not available. Refunds will not be given for unmounted classes.

Lesson Policy Standards

- Mounted and unmounted lessons are 45 minutes in length. Mounted lessons consist of tack adjustments, mounting each rider, exercises while mounted, class activities, cool down time, and dismounting.

- We consider a lesson to be starting when the mounting process starts. The instructor has the responsibility of maintaining client, volunteer, and horse safety always. Therefore, the instructor reserves the right to deviate from the above lesson outline when safety is a concern and if a rider's attention span is limited. This sometimes applies in classes with only one or two riders.

Rider Attire

- Whether a client is riding or working in the barn, hard-soled shoes or boots with small heels are required. This prevents the foot from sliding through the stirrup and becoming lodged. Open-toed shoes/sandals are not acceptable. Some riders need to wear ankle-foot orthotics, making it impossible to fit into a boot. For these riders arrangements can be made to use an alternate safety stirrup.
- Long pants are required to prevent pinching and rubbing. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather and needs to be non-slip in nature. Anyone arriving in **shorts** will not be mounted.
- ASTM approved helmets must be worn by all riders. You are welcome to purchase your own, well-fitted ASTM approved helmet at a local tack supply store such as Greenhawk. WETRA does have a selection of helmets available for the time you are at the farm.

Denial of Services

- WETRA reserves the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the applicant's safety and/or the safety of the horses, volunteers, staff, property, etc.

Discharge Policy

- WETRA strives to provide the safest possible conditions for participants, volunteers, and employees. The acceptance and continued participation of a client in our program depends on the availability of instructors, volunteers, and suitable horses. We must adhere to contraindications for participants established by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) and the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA). WETRA retains the right to refuse any participant that we cannot safely accommodate.

WETRA Policy for the Discharge of Participants

- Riders at WETRA may be asked to leave the riding program and may be offered alternate activities for several reasons, including but not limited to:

A. The development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point that therapeutic riding is no longer beneficial

and could harm the participant, or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.

B. A participant's weight reaching or exceeding 170 pounds, or circumstances in which WETRA is unable to safely accommodate the participant based on their height-to-weight ratio.
C. A display of threatening behaviour, animal abuse, the abuse of others at the farm, verbal abuse of volunteers or others, alcohol or drug use on the WETRA grounds, or behaviour that is disruptive for the normal functioning of the program.
D. Frequent missed lessons without advanced notification.
E. Inappropriate language or behaviour, rudeness to staff, volunteers, instructors, etc. will be addressed under a warning rule. After the warning, the rider will be excused from the program.

- All dismissals will be a joint decision involving the rider/guardian, Program Manager, and Executive Director. A written reason for dismissal will be recorded in the client's file. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the rider and/or guardian in private. The rider or guardians may appeal the dismissal in writing, and this will be presented at the next WETRA Board of Directors meeting. The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

Client Information Policies:

Privacy Policy

We collect information about your family to provide the best and most appropriate care for you or your participant. All personal information is processed and stored in a secure location

We DO NOT sell or rent your information to any person or organization. Information is only given to those directly involved in providing a service to your participant, or as required by law. We retain your information to enable us to communicate with you if we have new information that may be of interest to you.

Keep WETRA Informed

- Throughout the year, it is vitally important to inform WETRA of any changes in a client's condition that could impact his or her ability to ride safely.
- Changes in physical or mental condition or changes in medication can have unfortunate consequences for a rider, potentially affecting balance, coordination, stamina, vision, or hearing. WETRA needs to know if a client has experienced an onset of things like: episodic dizziness, headache, asthma, or abnormal blood pressure. It is the responsibility of the adult

client or the parent/guardian of a minor in our program to keep WETRA up to date on any such issues.

General Safety Rules and Guidelines:

- Children must be always supervised. Please do not leave children unattended or allow them to run and play loudly in and around the WETRA facility. We need to be courteous to all who use the facility.
- Please do not go into the barn or paddocks to visit with the horses without staff supervision.
- Your family members and friends are always encouraged to visit, but please observe quietly from the family viewing room.
- Our horses and volunteers should be treated kindly – they work hard for us all.
- No photographs can be taken unless a rider has a signed photo release on file. Please check with the instructor or Program Manager before taking any photographs or videos prior to the class.
- For safety reasons, parents, caregivers, and visitors are asked to stay on the inside of the family viewing room unless they are asked to enter the arena by the instructor.
- While the instructor is giving directions, interaction such as waving to the riders, should be avoided so that they can focus on the lesson.