

Horse, donkey, pony or other equine related activities

Guidelines



Document title	Horse, donkey, pony or other equine related activities
Contact details	Quality Teaching and Learning
Approved by	Operational Policy Subcommittee
Date approved	December 2019
Document review	Two years
TRM number	50:D19:119914

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	24/04/2020	Operational Policy Coordination Unit	Updated NTG template, reviewed readability, accessibility, author and publishing standard

Acronyms	Full form
ACM	Animal Care and Management
AHC	Agriculture, Horticulture, Conservation
AHIC	Australia Horse Industry Council
AS/NZS	Australian Standards/New Zealand Standards
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
NT	Northern Territory
PLB	Personal Locator Beacon
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TRM	Territory Records Manager
WHS	Work Health and Safety

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Read this document with the [Excursions policy](#)¹, [Animals in schools policy](#)², and the Official travel policy, guidelines and procedures (internal access only).

1. Introduction

These guidelines are for schools with students in Years 7 to 12 participating in any equine related activities to ensure legislative compliance, and to minimise the risks associated with equine programs and nationally accredited equine industry courses.

Treat any animals used in any of the Department of Education's programs with the required duty of care as per the [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#)³ and [Animal Welfare Regulations 2000](#)⁴.

2. Definitions

Equine, a member of the horse family for example a horse, pony or donkey.

Person in Charge, a person providing tuition in equine related activities who could be a teacher, trainer or other Principal-approved staff member who:

- is Horse Safety Australia Instructor Accredited
- has at least 5 years training in equine activities
- holds a current First Aid Certificate (minimum 'HLTAID003 Apply First Aid' or equivalent)
- if in a remote place, has completed HLTAID005 Apply First Aid in remote situation or equivalent
- has a current Ochre Card.

Person in Charge for RTO's conducting training with school students, is the trainer/assessor who must have the qualifications/vocational competencies as per Requirements for all trainers and assessors listed in User Guide: Safety in Equine Training – Companion Volume to support delivery of equine units of competency in: ACM Animal Care & Management and AHC Agriculture, Horticulture & Conservation & Land Management Training Packages Release 1.0 November 2017.

Emergency Action Plan, is a set of documented and well-researched procedures which are initiated by the person in charge of the equine related activity on the occurrence of a major incident.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as helmets, enclosed shoes and eye protection that meet the required Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS).

Premises, the buildings and grounds (including associated facilities) used by students, persons in charge, staff and visitors, during or in the course of activities.

Risk assessment, is a procedure undertaken by the person in charge of the equine related activity to identify any potential hazards that could cause harm to students involved in the activity. This is documented in a risk management plan and an emergency action plan.

Training activities, is an organised series of activities held in (usually) the one place at the one time. Activities have a defined start and end and may involve both trainers and students.

¹ https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/441891/Excursions-Policy.pdf

² https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/436003/ANIMALS-IN-SCHOOLS_POLICY.pdf

³ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/ANIMAL-WELFARE-ACT-1999>

⁴ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/ANIMAL-WELFARE-REGULATIONS-2000>

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Principals

Principals must give authorisation for the equine related activity to proceed and are responsible for ensuring that:

- all relevant staff are aware of the requirements of the equine related activity, and identifying students who are suitable for the equine related activity
- ensure parents/legal guardians are informed of what the equine related activity will involve and receive permission/information letters
- training and supervision requirements are applied to all equine related activities
- all required paperwork/forms listed within these Guidelines have been completed and that any incomplete paperwork/forms are rectified prior to the equine related activity commencing
- all persons involved in the delivery of equine related activities know about, and have access to, all relevant documentation and understand the Horse, donkey, pony or other equine related guidelines.

3.2. Department of Education – Industry Training Programs

The Industry Training Programs unit within the Department of Education are responsible for ensuring that:

- Principals are provided with the required paperwork/forms listed within these Guidelines
- they provide guidance and assistance with the proposed equine related activities.

3.3. Person in Charge

The Person in Charge could be a teacher, trainer or other Principal-approved staff member that is Horse Safety Australia Instructor Accredited, holds a current First Aid Certificate and Ochre Card.

The Person in Charge is responsible for ensuring that:

- an Equine Practical Activities Pre-activity Risk Assessment is conducted (Template D) for the equine related activities every time they are run,
- an appropriate Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan is authorised by the Principal and implemented
- an Equine Suitability Audit and Biosecurity Declaration is conducted
- horse and rider are matched appropriately and the Matching Student to Horse Form (Template B) is completed
- all participants of the equine activity will initially be beginners until appropriate evidence is gathered to determine them intermediate or experienced
- they understand and accept that they take overall responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants in the equine related activity
- a First Aid Kit is available at the activity site
- the Equine Usage Register (Template C) is completed at the end of each week
- adherence to appropriate staff to student ratios.

3.4. Students

- must comply with Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirements
- must take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- must ensure that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

4. Equine Activity Documents/Templates

Copies of the following must be supplied to the Person in Charge/Principal:

Pre Equine Related Activity

- Standard Operating Procedures for Equine Related Activities
- Learning or Program plans two weeks prior to activities
- Student Profile/ Acknowledgement of risk (**Template A**)
- Equine Practical Activities Pre-activity Risk Assessment (**Template D**)

Equine Suitability Audit and Biosecurity

- Equine Suitability Audit and Biosecurity Declaration
- Matching Student to Horse (**Template B**)

Equine Usage

- All equine usage is to be reported on the Equine Usage Register weekly (**Template C**).

5. Guidelines

5.1. Prior to the activity:

- all Pre Equine Related Activity documentation (listed in Section 4) has been completed and supplied to the Person in Charge/Principal
- a pre-activity check on working environment and anticipated weather conditions.

5.2. During the activity:

- monitor environmental and other external factors e.g. weather conditions, presence of vehicles, other animals and stop the activity as required
- monitor student behaviour and take action if their behaviour is inappropriate
- ensure that students follow all instructions for any equine activity
- alter delivery of the Learning Plan for the practical session if circumstances change e.g. weather conditions, accident, and student illness, tiredness or injury
- sun smart procedures and practices are followed by all
- take immediate action where it is apparent that the rider is not applying correct riding skills or techniques and where there is risk of injury to the student(s)
- equines are ridden in accordance with Person in Charge directives
- no student or an unauthorised person handles touches or rides the equines unless directed to do so by the Person in Charge

- all students and persons taking part in the equine related activity comply with dress code, wear appropriate PPE and that PPE is properly fitted and remains in place for duration of the activity
- monitor all equipment being used and take appropriate action if required e.g. breakages or equipment not suited to the training.
- update Equine Usage register – times, injuries, and illness.

5.3. Handling

Strategies to ensure safe handling include:

- undertaking a risk assessment prior to using equines and determine control measures
- you are working in a contained area, with no open gates or opportunity for the equine to escape; facilities must allow for easy egress by student or person in charge
- all persons participating in equine related activities wear suitable PPE
- access to a fully stocked first aid kit including resuscitation mask
- gear used is appropriate and in good repair
- matching students with suitable equines according to their handling experience and history of the equines' behaviour
- dangerous equines are not used
- isolate the use of equines that don't interact well with other equines, e.g. kick or bite
- inform students of animal welfare issues prior to handling equines.

5.4. Riding in Enclosed Areas

Strategies to ensure safe riding should build on strategies listed in handling and include:

- riding area is safe e.g. good footings, closed gates, hazards removed
- assess suitability of equines for the riding group prior to the commencement of a riding program e.g., soundness, health, behaviour, level of education where appropriate
- establish the riding ability of each student prior to a riding program
- match equines to students e.g. size of the students, riding experience, equine's temperament and level of education
- use a mounting block for beginner riders to save the equine's back, the Person in Charge's health and to assist the rider to mount
- hold the equine for a beginner rider, check stirrup lengths and width
- use a progression of riding skills to ensure students ride to their ability e.g. begin in small yard with basic skills until students are competent to extend themselves into larger yards/arenas and more open spaces
- provide clear instruction to students at all times
- students are aware of terminology used and can hear the Person in Charge's commands
- students understand allowable space between equines, pass left hand to left hand, slower pace to the inside of the riding arena, no stopping on the outside track, all riders to halt immediately is someone falls off
- spectators are outside the riding arena and do not interfere with, or affect the riding activity in any way.

5.5. Riding in Open Areas

Strategies to ensure riding in open areas should build on strategies listed in Handling and Riding in Enclosed Areas and include:

- students have the required skills to handle and ride equines in open spaces prior to the commencement of the activity
- choose equines suitable to be ridden by students in the designated open space
- check route before riding out and undertake hazard identification, risk assessment and determine control measures for the activity; in particular analyse presence of stock, presence of people, weather conditions, other activities occurring and the suitability of gear and update the information possibly gathered at an earlier time e.g. avoid low tree branches, keep away from main roads and other physical hazards like cliffs, avoid other animals and vehicles
- mobile telephone/radio/Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB)/Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) for access to emergency services
- students are dressed appropriately for foreseeable weather conditions
- provide students with clear instructions about the activities required and what to do if problems or an accident arise
- ride in formations appropriate to the terrain and conditions – provide instruction on riding in different environments
- have students dismount at an appropriate place at the conclusion of the activity (as determined by the risk assessment).

6. Safety and Risk Management

All equine related activities are regarded as high risk. The ability of a rider to prevent, manage or react to the unpredictable movements of an equine will have a direct impact on their own safety and that of others in the same learning/teaching environment.

Principals, Person in Charge and associated staff must provide a safe working environment for students, other staff and visitors.

In line with current industry practice, all equines used for training purposes will be required to be wormed and vaccinated against Tetanus and Strangles.

7. First Aid and Emergencies

Appropriate first aid and/or medical facilities must be available at each activity. A comprehensive first aid kit and a portable first aid kit is the minimum requirement for all equine activities.

An effective means of communicating with Northern Territory (NT) emergency services and local emergency agencies must be available at all times. Persons in Charge must have a mobile phone with them during the activity. In the case of remote locations or where telephone reception may be poor, a satellite phone and an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon or Personal Locator Beacon must be available.

The NT emergency services numbers for the local emergency services MUST be logged into the phones.

The Person in Charge must carry a completed written communication brief with them that includes contact numbers and directions to the course location by road and a copy supplied to the Principal prior to commencing activities.

The Person in Charge must report any accidents/incidents or emergencies to the Principal as soon as possible so the Principal or a school delegate can contact students' emergency contacts where necessary. The Person in Charge is to complete an Incident Report as per the school's policy.

8. Related Documents

Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) - Procedures for the Delivery of Horse Industry Training Version 4 January 2018

User Guide: Safety in Equine Training – Companion Volume to support delivery of equine units of competency in: ACM Animal Care and Management and AHC Agriculture, Horticulture & Conservation & Land Management Training Packages Release 1.0 November 2017

Safe Work Australia – Guide to Managing Risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses June 2014