

# Horse, donkey, pony or other equine related activities

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Read this document with the [Excursions policy](#), [Animals in schools policy](#), 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](#) and [Animal Welfare Regulations 2000](#).

## 2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Emergency Action Plan	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.
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is Horse Safety Australia Instructor Accredited</li> <li>• has at least 5 years training in equine activities</li> <li>• holds a current first aid certificate – minimum HLTAID003 Apply First Aid or equivalent</li> <li>• if in a remote place, has completed HLTAID005 Apply First Aid in remote situation or equivalent</li> <li>• has a current Ochre card.</li> </ul>
Person in charge for the RTO conducting training with school students	The trainer or assessor who must have the qualifications or 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.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Personal safety equipment such as helmets, enclosed shoes and eye protection that meet the required Australian/New Zealand Standards.
Premises	Buildings and grounds, including associated facilities used by students, persons in charge, staff and visitors, during activities.
Risk assessment	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	An organised series of activities usually held in the one place at the one time. Activities have a defined start and end and may involve both trainers and students.

## 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
- parents are informed of what the equine related activity will involve and receive permission and information letters
- training and supervision requirements are applied to all equine related activities
- all required paperwork and forms listed within these guidelines have been completed and that any incomplete paperwork and 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 activities guidelines.

### 3.2. Department of Education – Training and Careers

The Training and Careers unit within the Department of Education are responsible for ensuring that:

- principals are provided with the required paperwork and 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 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 is completed
- all participants of the equine activity are initially 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 is completed at the end of each week
- adherence to appropriate staff to student ratios occurs.

### 3.4. Students

Students must:

- comply with work health and safety requirements
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- ensure that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

## 4. Equine activity documents and templates

Copies of the following must be supplied to the person in charge and the principal:

Pre-equine related activity:

- standard operating procedures for equine related activities
- learning or program plans two weeks prior to activities
- student profile and acknowledgement of risk form
- equine practical activities pre-activity risk assessment template.

Equine suitability audit and biosecurity:

- equine suitability audit and biosecurity declaration
- matching student to horse form.

Equine usage:

- all equine usage is to be reported weekly on the Equine usage register template.

## 5. Guidelines

### 5.1. Prior to the activity

- All pre-equine related activity documentation as listed in section 4, has been completed and supplied to the person in charge or principal.
- A pre-activity check completed on working environment and anticipated weather conditions.

### 5.2. During the activity

- Monitor environmental and other external factors, for example weather conditions, presence of vehicles, other animals and stop the activity as required.
- Monitor student behaviour and act 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, for example weather conditions, accident, and student illness, tiredness or injury.
- Ensure 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 students.

- Ensure equines are ridden in accordance with person in charge directives.
- Ensure no student or unauthorised person handles, touches or rides the equines unless directed to do so by the person in charge.
- Ensure all students and persons taking part in the equine related activity comply with dress code, wear appropriate PPE and that the PPE is properly fitted and remains in place for duration of the activity.
- Monitor all equipment being used and take appropriate action if required, for example breakages or equipment not suited to the training.
- Update the Equine usage register with 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
- isolating the use of equines that don't interact well with other equines, for example that kick or bite
- informing 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, for example good footings, closed gates, hazards removed
- assessing suitability of equines for the riding group prior to the commencement of a riding program, for example soundness, health, behaviour, level of education where appropriate
- establishing the riding ability of each student prior to a riding program
- matching equines to students, for example size of the students, riding experience, equine's temperament and level of education
- using 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
- holding the equine for a beginner rider, checking stirrup lengths and width
- using a progression of riding skills to ensure students ride to their ability, for example beginning in a small yard with basic skills until students are competent to extend themselves into larger yards or arenas and more open spaces
- always providing clear instruction to students

- 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 if 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
- choosing equines suitable to be ridden by students in the designated open space
- checking the route before riding out and undertaking hazard identification, risk assessment and determining control measures for the activity; analysing presence of stock, presence of people, weather conditions, other activities occurring and the suitability of gear and updating the information possibly gathered at an earlier time, for example avoiding low tree branches, keeping away from main roads and other physical hazards like cliffs, avoiding other animals and vehicles
- access to emergency services by a mobile telephone, radio, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacons (PLB)
- students are dressed appropriately for foreseeable weather conditions
- providing students with clear instructions about the activities required and what to do if problems or an accident arise
- riding in formations appropriate to the terrain and conditions – providing instruction on riding in different environments
- having 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 and 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 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 EPIRB or PLB 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 immediately report any accident, incident or emergency to the principal. The principal or other principal approved staff member can contact students' emergency contacts where necessary. The person in charge is to complete an Incident report as per the school's procedures.

## 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.

### 8.1. Mandatory forms and templates

- Student profile and risk acknowledgement - form
- Matching student to horse - form
- Practical activities: pre-activity risk assessment – template
- Equine usage register – template



Acronyms	Full form
ACM	Animal Care and Management
AHC	Agriculture, Horticulture, Conservation
AHIC	Australia Horse Industry Council
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
NT	Northern Territory
PLB	Personal Locator Beacons
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RTO	Registered Training Organisations
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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