



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES & THERAPIES



River Valley Riders COVID-19 Re-Opening Plan

April 2021

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Reference Sources: PATH Intl., Inspire Therapeutic Riding, SuMMiT Centre for Therapeutic Riding, Joy Ride Therapeutic Riding, Hearts & Horses Therapeutic Riding Center, US Equestrian Federation and CDC for information and examples.

Re-Open Plan – Phased Entry

Client services will be offered using a strict phased entry approach. The phases and their descriptions will be detailed in this document. First, and foremost, policies and procedures outlined in this plan are subject to change, at any time, based on local and federal mandates that are issued, or suggested, during this pandemic.

Our focus is on the SAFETY of our participants, staff, volunteers, and equines in an organized fashion with strong communication among the team. RVR is following the requirements from the MN Department of Health and CDC.

Re-Opening Strategies

- **General Considerations for All**

- No one is allowed to be at the RVR lesson site for 14 days after the date that they or someone in their household returned from international travel, if they are not fully vaccinated, as designated by the CDC and MN Department of Health recommendations.
- If anyone has been at the RVR lesson site in the past 14 days and tests positive for COVID-19, they must inform RVR and the program may be shut down immediately for up to 14 days to allow staff to self-quarantine. Anyone who was on site at the time of possible exposure will be contacted immediately.
- If anyone has been at the RVR lesson site and is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they must inform RVR. Depending upon the situation, the program maybe shut down immediately for up to 14 days to allow staff to self-quarantine. Anyone who was on site at the time of possible indirect exposure will be contacted immediately.
- Everyone will receive a health screening questionnaire that they must refer to **every time** before coming to the RVR lesson site. One part of this screening requires that **everyone** (participant, family member, volunteers and staff) coming to the lesson site must have a body temperature less than 99.5°F. **No one with any of the health screening questionnaire's signs or symptoms should come to the lesson site.**
- Face masks are required while indoors only while waiting and for mounting, then riders, volunteers and instructors may remove their masks after rider is mounted. Families waiting or watching lessons **in the indoor arena** need to wear their masks while indoors and maintain 6 feet social distancing as much as possible. Masks are not required outside.
- The number of people at the RVR lesson site will be limited when inclement weather and we are indoors.

- **Facility and Staff**

- Signs will be posted to remind people about handwashing following CDC guidelines, social distancing, and no access areas.
- Instructors will aid participants from the side or back as much as possible. Avoiding standing directly in front of them as much as possible.
- Instructors are trained on these new procedures.
- A signed RVR COVID-19 waiver is required.

- **Volunteers**

- RVR will assess volunteers of their readiness and comfort to return through continued communication and outreach.
- A signed RVR COVID-19 waiver is required, as well as the normal volunteer documentation.
- RVR will be limiting the quantity of volunteers at the lesson site until further notice.
- RVR will provide training for new volunteers as needed.
- Volunteers must wear face masks when indoors at the RVR lesson site while waiting or while rider is mounting. Masks may be taken off when horse is stopped away from the ramp (e.g. to have reins attached) and for the duration of the lesson. Masks should be placed in volunteers' pocket or lowered on their neck. Masks are not required when outside.
- An instructor or staff person will log your on-site volunteer hours. The sign in sheet will not be used.
- Email other volunteer hours that are not during lesson times to Cheryl Holt at cherylholt73@gmail.com

- **Participants**

- The RVR plan is for a staggered program re-opening beginning with independent riders who can maintain social distancing rules during lessons, wash hands following CDC guidelines, wear a mask while indoors, and require 0-1 volunteer (Horse Leaders only).
- A signed COVID-19 waiver is required, as well as the normal liability release and physician's clearance documents.
- Only one family member/caregiver may accompany the participant(s) if inclement weather and we are in the indoor arena.
- All participants must wear face masks when indoors at the RVR lesson site while waiting or during the mounting process. Masks may be taken off when horse is stopped away from the ramp (e.g. to have reins attached) and for the duration of the lesson. Masks should be placed in riders' pocket or lowered on their neck. Family members/caregivers must wear face masks when indoors at the RVR lesson site. Masks ~~may be removed~~ are not required when outside.
- Everyone must maintain social distancing and wear their mask while indoors as specified above.
- Participants/families/caregivers will be asked to leave promptly after lessons to limit the number of people on site.
- RVR will follow ADA guidelines to ensure all individuals are treated equally.

Programming Plan

- **All Phases**

- Tack
 - Tack will be set out on saddle racks.
 - Changes of tack will be kept to the minimum.
 - Use precautions when handling all tack (saddle pads, lead ropes, etc.) and wash your hands when able.
- **The tack shed will be restricted access to instructors and designated volunteers only.**

- **Phase One**

- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton site only.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who can independently mount, will wear a mask indoors, understand and follow social distancing rules, do not require any sidewalkers, only assistance from a horse leader.
- 1-2 riders per instructor.
- Planned length is six weeks. Dates are week of April 19th through week of May 24th, 2021.
- RVR will evaluate the situation before moving into next phase. A factor is evaluating the success of Spring Session.

- **Phase Two**

- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton and May Township sites.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who can independently mount or mount with minimal assistance, will wear a mask indoors for short periods of time, understand and follow social distancing rules, require 0 to 1 sidewalker and a horse leader. Sidewalker support by **ankle hold only**.
- 2-3 riders per instructor for therapeutic riding lessons.
- Carriage driving lessons will begin for drivers who will wear a mask indoors for short periods of time (e.g. while waiting indoors), understand and follow social distancing rules. For concern of the drivers' safety from potential tripping hazards, masks are not required for mounting the carriage.
- Plan to begin Hippotherapy services at the Afton site.
- Planned length is five to six weeks depending on location. Dates are week of June 7th through week of July 19th, 2021.
- RVR will evaluate the situation before moving into next phase. A factor is evaluating the success of Early Summer Session.

- **Phase Three**

- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton and May Township sites.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who have been participating in Phases 1-2. Additional riders may be added depending on the support they require and the status of the virus risk. All riders may still be required to wear a mask indoors for short periods of time, understand and follow social distancing rules, require 0 to 2 sidewalkers and horse leader.
- Continue Carriage Driving lessons.
- 3-4 riders per instructor for therapeutic riding lessons.
- Planned length is five to six weeks depending on location. Dates are week of July 26th thru week of August 30th, 2021.
- RVR will continue to evaluate the situation to determine if safe to continue sessions through end of October.