

# PROGRAM HANDBOOK



**PATHWAYS**  
animal assisted therapy, inc.

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Thank you for being a part of Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. We hope your experience with us is as rewarding for you as it is for us. With an organization such as ours, many questions may come up at a time when there is no one around to answer them. This handbook outlines our policies and procedures to help answer any questions you may have as to how and why something is done.

Thank you for your support, and please feel free to contact us at 785-594-3827, [pathwaysaat@yahoo.com](mailto:pathwaysaat@yahoo.com), or visit our web site at [www.pathwaysaat.com](http://www.pathwaysaat.com).

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. is a non-profit therapeutic riding organization. We provide therapeutic activities for anyone that can use some improvement in their lives, whether it is physical, social, psychological, or even spiritual. Pathways' mission is to utilize the human-animal bond to provide therapy and healing to humans or animals in need.

In order for our classes to run as efficiently as possible, it helps if everyone has a reference to look at to know what the policy is on certain issues. Please read this handbook as is relevant to your involvement.

## LOCATION OF CLASSES

In Baldwin City, the classes will be held at 811 N. 500 Rd. This location is someone's home, so please remember this and treat it as such. There are certain rules that should be followed to keep everyone as safe as possible. They are as follows:

## BARN RULES

1. No Running.
2. No yelling.
3. No Smoking.
4. Work only with the horse assigned to you.
5. Do not enter the stall or pen of any horse without permission.
6. Stay in designated areas.
7. Close any gate you open.
8. Open any gate you close.
9. Do not feed any horse without specific permission.
10. No riding in the arena or pastures with loose horses.

If you have a question, direct it to the instructor or volunteer coordinator. This will eliminate any confusion.

## PARKING

Please limit parking to the driveway as much as possible, especially in muddy conditions. Volunteers, please park from the tack shed to the road, and leave the area around the barn for the riders and their parents.

## ATTIRE

Appropriate attire must be worn at all times. For safety reasons, we will enforce clothing rules. Clothing should be weather appropriate, comfortable, and allow you to move as freely as possible. Clothing that is too loose or baggy may get caught on equipment, so please keep that in mind.

### **Required attire is as follows:**

1. **Pants:** All **riders** must wear long pants at all times. This will prevent chafing from the saddle and other equipment when riding. Jeans are the most appropriate, but sweat pants, etc., work too. No nylon or “wind pants,” please, as these tend to allow the rider to slip too much. **Volunteers** may wear shorts in the summertime, but should be advised that we will be walking in tall grass and you may want to protect your legs.
2. **Shoes:** Boots with a heel are recommended for everyone. Sturdy, comfortable, closed-toed shoes are required for everyone. No sandals or flip-flops will be allowed. **Riders** should wear boots or some kind of shoe with a heel and thick soles to prevent the foot being caught in the stirrup during exercises. **Volunteers** should wear comfortable shoes or boots, preferably leather, with thick soles. This prevents damage if the foot gets stepped on. **Steel-toed boots are NOT a good idea, as they can actually cut toes off if stepped on in a certain spot.**
3. **Helmets: All riders must wear an ASTM-SEI approved helmet. NO EXCEPTIONS!!** We have several to choose from, or the rider may bring their own, but it must be inspected and approved by the instructor.
4. **Jewelry:** It is recommended that you leave your jewelry at home. Necklaces, rings, long earrings, etc., may get caught on equipment and break, get lost, or cause damage to you somehow.

### **CANCELLATION/WEATHER POLICY**

Pathways reserves the right to cancel classes when deemed necessary by the executive director, riding instructor and volunteer coordinator. Scheduled classes will only be cancelled if the weather is bad or the instructor or horses are ill or injured. If one of these circumstances occurs, everyone will be notified as quickly as possible. Due to the fact that we do not have an indoor arena, our class schedule will be affected by the weather. The weather in Kansas is always a bit tough to predict, but Pathways will make every effort to keep everyone as safe as possible, so we will err on the side of caution rather than risk injury to riders, volunteers, horses or staff. The following guidelines will guide the Weather Policy for Pathways classes:

1. Any severe weather warning for Douglas or the surrounding counties close to us (Shawnee, Osage, Franklin, Johnson) will result in cancellation of classes. This includes rain, thunderstorms, tornadoes, ice, snow, etc.
2. Lingering effects from bad weather, such as ice, flooding, downed limbs or power lines, etc. may result in cancellation of classes.
3. Extreme high temperatures may cause cancellation of classes, to prevent injury or illness to volunteers, horses or riders. Our policy for this is if the temperature or heat index is 95 degrees F or above, classes will be cancelled.
4. Extreme low temperatures may also cause cancellation of classes. Our policy for this is if the temperature or wind chill is lower than 32 degrees F, classes will be cancelled.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

When a rider enrolls, they are making a commitment to show up at a specific time for the duration of the session they are enrolled in. They are filling a vacancy that could have been filled by someone else, so it is important for the student to show up when scheduled.

It is just as important for volunteers to show up when scheduled, as the student counts on the volunteers to be able to ride. Any volunteer who doesn't show and doesn't call twice will be replaced for the remainder of the session.

In order for a student to ride, Pathways must have up to three volunteers, a horse, an instructor, tack, and arena preparations ready for the student when they arrive.

If the student does not show up and does not call ahead, it is a waste of time, energy and other resources for the program. Therefore, it is extremely important that all riders show up when scheduled.

The rider is unable to ride if the necessary number of volunteers is not available. So, it is just as important that volunteers show up. We depend on our volunteers to make our classes possible, so we ask that our volunteers sign up to work in a class each session, and commit to being there for the entire session. If you can make all but one or two classes, just let us know in advance and we will find a substitute. However, if you do not let us know in advance, after two missed classes you will be replaced as the assigned volunteer for that rider.

It is understandable that the unexpected happens, and sometimes it is impossible to know in advance. We ask that as much advance notice as possible be given. Except in the case of illness, if we do not hear from the rider at least 24 hours of when class is to start, it will be considered a no call/no show. As we will have made all of the preparations for class, a no call/no show will result in the student being charged for the class.

Each rider is allowed up to two no call/no show lessons for the duration of their time in the program. After the second missed class, the student's attendance record, as well as their reasons for missing class, will be submitted to the Pathways Board for review.

If the student is to miss class and tells us ahead of time, the student will not be charged, unless more than two classes a session will be missed. In this event, it may be preferable for the student to sit a session out, and come back when they can attend regularly. Exceptions will be made in the event of illness and/or other issues that may arise, on an individual basis.

# RIDER INFORMATION

Due to the nature of our programs, there are a few requirements each rider must meet before they can be accepted into the program. First and foremost, riding cannot be detrimental to the rider physically. Riding a horse is contraindicated for people with several physical conditions (we can provide a list of contraindications to therapeutic riding). Each individual is evaluated and a program is set up specifically to meet their needs. Pathways reserves the right to refuse services in the event that riding is seen as a danger to the individual student.

All riders must sign registration forms, liability releases and consent for emergency medical treatment before they will be allowed to ride. Refusal to sign any of these forms will result in the student not being admitted into the riding program. This is to protect the student and the program in the event of an incident. All students must also have a physician's permission slip signed by their physician, indicating that they have been informed of the student's intent to ride, and they find riding an acceptable activity for the student. Additionally, all riders must agree to abide by the attendance policy.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships will be available on a limited basis according to available funds. These will be awarded according to need, as determined by the scholarship application. All portions of the application must be filled out and submitted prior to the student's enrollment. The Scholarship Committee will review the application, and scholarships will be awarded as determined by this committee.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULES

All of Pathways classes are set up as nine-week sessions. All payments for Pathways services shall be made in advance of the student's participation in class.

We require that all classes be paid for in advance, and we reserve the right to refuse services to anyone that does not adhere to this policy. Payments can be made according to three separate payment schedules:

1. **Tri-weekly:** Classes can be paid for three weeks at a time, but must always be paid up before the rider is allowed to ride in a class that has not been paid for. Payment for the full nine-week session will be expected, and riders or guardians must sign an agreement to pay according to this schedule.

2. **Half:** The nine-week schedule can be broken in half, with the rider paying for 4.5 rides at a time. The remaining fees will be required before the fifth ride of the session, or the rider will not be allowed to ride in a class that has not been paid for. Payment for the full nine-week session will be expected and riders or guardians must sign an agreement to pay according to this schedule.
3. **Full:** The entire nine-week session will be paid in full. This insures the student will be allowed to ride the entire session and eliminates confusion on when to pay for the remainder of the session.

### STUDENT DISMISSAL POLICY

Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. strives to serve everyone who wishes to participate in our programs as well as we possibly can. However, times may arise when a student may need to be removed from the program. Pathways reserves the right to remove students from their programs as deemed necessary by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. Students may be removed from the program for the following reasons:

1. Physical/mental/emotional conditions no longer permit the student to ride in any aspect of any Pathways' program.
2. The student has become violent and/or dangerous to self, other people or animals.
3. Conditions within the program change, which affects Pathways' ability to serve the student.
4. Payment for classes has not been made according to arrangements made with Pathways. No attempt has been made to make payments.
5. The student no longer wishes to ride, but continues to come to class, due to outside influences.

If the student meets one of these criteria for discharge, the executive director and student advocate will meet to determine the best course of action. If both parties determine the student should be discharged, the executive director will contact the student, parent/guardian/caregiver, and all will determine the best course of action involved. A center occurrence report shall be filed, and the instructor and executive director shall both report to the board of directors.

# VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

As a volunteer at Pathways, you are extremely important to our programs, and are a valued member of our team. Our students and staff depend on you to make our programs possible. We understand what an undertaking it can be to donate your time to help others, and commend you for making such an effort. We do ask that if you agree to commit to volunteer for a session, you make every effort to attend the classes for this session. Our students can be very sensitive to changes in their surroundings, and can be unsettled if changes are made without warning. If you cannot make a class, please let us know as soon as you can, so we can find a substitute. If you cannot commit to making most, if not all of the classes for a session, we ask that you sign up as a substitute, to be called upon in case another volunteer cannot make it to a class.

As a volunteer at Pathways, you will find three different options for assisting our students. They are:

1. **Sidewalker:** The sidewalker is an integral part of our riding program. As a sidewalker, your main focus will be on the rider from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave. The sidewalker has direct interaction with the rider, and will assist with staying on the horse and performing exercises and specific tasks that are physically and emotionally therapeutic to the rider.
2. **Horse handler:** The horse handler is also essential to our therapeutic riding program. The horse handler is the person in charge of the horse for the riding session. This requires knowledge about horses, as well as experience working around them. As a horse handler, you will assist the rider with grooming and tacking up the horse. You will also lead the horse during the class as needed by the rider. The horse handler's job is to pay attention to the horse, and only control it to the extent that the rider is unable to do so. You would also be responsible for maintaining spacing in between horses, and determining if the horse is uncomfortable in a given situation.
3. **Barn Assistant:** The barn assistant helps keep the barn neat and organized. This includes cleaning stalls, cleaning and organizing the tack shed, bringing horses in for class, grooming them if needed, turning them out afterwards, and whatever other barn duties need to be done.

Due to the importance of the volunteers being able to perform the necessary duties, we have guidelines for people who would like to volunteer in our classes. They are as follows:

**Sidewalker requirements:**

1. Must be willing/able to walk continuously for approximately an hour, with intervals of jogging. May need to have their arm at shoulder height or above throughout class.
2. Must be able to commit to being present for the allotted time slot for the duration of that session, except for illness or other unforeseen circumstances.
3. Must be willing and able to work directly with the student before and during the riding session.
4. Must be willing and able to deal with students in emergency situations, as guided by the instructor, or as taught in volunteer training.
5. Must be willing to follow directions given by instructor, and to help the rider during every step of the ride, if necessary.
6. Must be willing to let the student try things for themselves, and only help when necessary.
7. Must understand that the class is a therapy session for the riders, and not necessarily a social session for the volunteers. Can focus on the task at hand, and not initiate other conversation during the lesson.
8. Must be able to understand directions given, and think through the process of what is being asked. A sidewalker should have the ability to help the student understand what is being asked.
9. Must complete sidewalker training in a satisfactory manner, as determined by Pathways' personnel.

**Horse handler requirements:**

1. Must have at least 25 hours of experience as a sidewalker, or equivalent horse experience.
2. Must have a thorough understanding of the program, as well as the purpose of a horse handler.
3. Must be able to control the horse in all circumstances that are likely to arise, including emergency situations.
4. Must be able to walk for up to an hour at a time, with intervals of jogging.
5. Must be able to groom and tack a horse correctly.
6. Must be capable of correctly interpreting horse mood indicators, and recognizing danger signs before a situation gets out of hand.

7. Must be able to commit to being present for the allotted time slot for the duration of that session, except for illness or other unforeseen circumstances.
8. Must complete horse handler training in a satisfactory manner, as determined by Pathways' personnel.

### **VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL POLICY**

Any and all attempts will be made to find a suitable area for each person who is interested in being involved at Pathways. To best serve our mission, we will strive to accommodate the needs of everyone, as necessary. In the event that it becomes necessary to dismiss a volunteer or guest from center activities, the following procedures shall be followed.

**\*\*\*If a person is causing immediate danger to another person, the person will be removed from the facilities immediately, with the assistance of police, if necessary.\*\*\***

1. The volunteer coordinator and the executive director will meet and discuss the situation and options. If at all possible, a request will be made to move the volunteer into an area where they can be of assistance and will not be disruptive to students.
2. The volunteer coordinator and the executive director will meet with the person, and politely request that the person not return to the program unless and/or until the situation changes.
3. Both the executive director and the volunteer coordinator must agree upon the reasons for dismissal of an individual from center activities. The reasons will be professional only, and not on a personal level.
4. The situation will be discussed to the satisfaction of all involved, if at all possible. In the event that the volunteer would like to comment, they will be allowed to fill out a grievance form, which will be submitted to the board of directors for review.
5. The executive director and volunteer coordinator will file a center occurrence report, and will report to the board of directors if deemed necessary.
6. Any and all further interactions with the individual will involve at least one board member.



# DONATE TO PATHWAYS

- Yes! I'd like to help support Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. with my tax-deductible gift.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my gift to:

- Sponsor a rider. Please list rider's name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sponsor a horse. Please list horse's name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Be used where there is the greatest need.
- \_\_\_\_\_

Please see the reverse side of this form for a selection of our wish list items. When making a donation, please make checks payable to: Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. and mail, along with this form, to 811 N. 500 Rd., Baldwin City, KS 66006 or visit [www.pathwaysaat.com](http://www.pathwaysaat.com). If you are interested helping Pathways with an in-kind donation, please contact us at 785-594-3827.

# WISH LIST

Brightly colored toys	Hay feeders
Nerf-type balls	Buckets
Basketball hoops	Brushes
Bean bags	Combs
Colored muck buckets	Hoofpicks
Senior feed	Truck and horse trailer
Brome square bales	Manure forks
Alfalfa square bales	Manure spreader
Big round bales of brome	Computer
Big round bales of prairie hay	Copier
Dressage saddles	Office supplies
Hunt seat saddles	Bookcases
Western saddles	File cabinets
Sidepulls	Fencing materials
Halters	Tractor arena worker
Rainbow reins	Arena footing materials
Cotton lead ropes	
Leather english reins	
Headstalls with nosebands	
Ground poles	
Jump standards and poles	
Saddle pads of all types	

This handbook serves to provide information to everyone as to the policies and procedures of Pathways Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. It is by no means set in stone, and Pathways reserves the right to change these policies and procedures as needed to preserve the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Thank you for reading our program handbook. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to address them with our executive director.

