



High Hurdles Participant Handbook

High Hurdles provides a unique opportunity for growth, development, and other positive changes for people with special needs through the horse/human bond.

Welcome! This packet contains our policies and procedures, as well as some general information about the facility and lessons. Please read through the entirety of the packet for answers to questions and reach out for any additional information.

We look forward to having you in lessons and thank you for adhering to these guidelines!



High Hurdles Participant Handbook

Contact Information



Barn Cell: (716)548-0004 (text or call, all staff)

Office Phone: (716)436-3935 (call only-direct line to Shelby)

Fax #: (716)496-4010



Website: www.highhurdlestrc.org

Social Media:

Facebook: High Hurdles Therapeutic Riding Program

Instagram: @highhurdlesprogram



Address:

13339 Rt 39

Sardinia, NY 14134

Director of High Hurdles:

Shelby Dytschkowskyj: shelby.dytschkowskyj@sasinc.org, (716) 436-3935

Instructor Contacts:

Jocelyn Wilkins: jocelyn.wilkins@sasinc.org, (716) 548-0004

Erin Hoelscher: erin.hoelscher@sasinc.org, (716) 548-0004

Samantha Parsell: samantha.parsell@sasinc.org, (716) 548-0004

Other SASi Contacts:

Billing/Invoices:

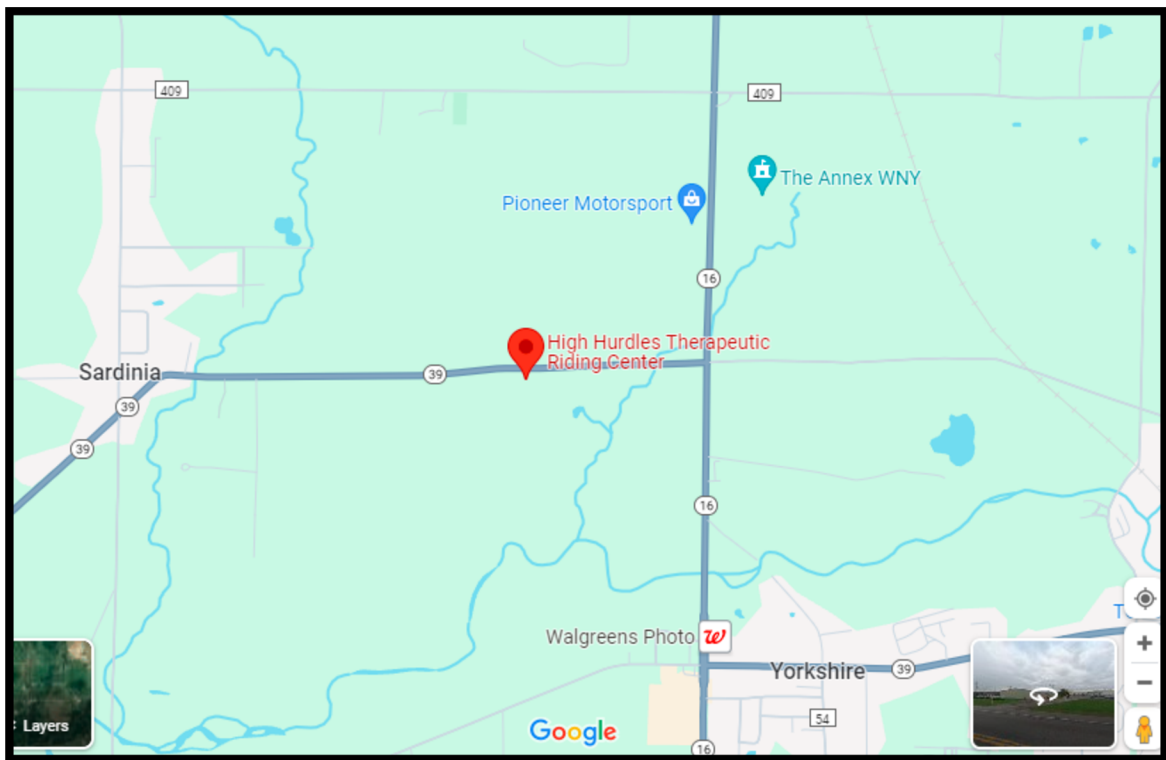
Elaine Mendrysa: emendrysa@sasinc.org, (716) 436-3714

VP of Business and Community Initiatives:

Shannon Nasca: shannon.nasca@sasinc.org, (716) 436-3934



Where to Find Us!





High Hurdles Participant Handbook

Registration Instructions

- U Forms are to be completed annually, including physician releases.
- U Complete all relevant information in the registration packet to help us determine the most appropriate lesson to place the rider in and will give the instructor important information to keep everyone safe and learning! In order to create appropriate groups, you may not receive confirmation until 2-3 weeks prior to the start of each session.
- U Paperwork must be complete prior to confirmation of lesson schedule.
- U Lessons are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Confirmations will be sent out prior to each individual session.
- U Multi-session riders may indicate their chosen times each session, but will not be confirmed until 3-4 weeks prior to each session. While registration for sessions operates on a first-come, first-served basis, please note the following:
 - If you request multiple sessions, we will do our best to accommodate you, however, to provide fair access to all riders, priority may be given to a rider who can only participate in one session if it becomes necessary to make scheduling adjustments.
- U *DO NOT* send payment with registration. **Registration packets are not a guarantee of services.** Riders will be screened to determine our ability to safely accommodate their needs. It can also be based on horse availability or PATH Int'l standards for when a rider might be contraindicated from riding. We do offer off-horse lessons for appropriate participants.
- U Fax, email or mail your packets to Shelby Dytschkowskyj (see contact information)
Payment is due by the end of the session. If payment is not received this may impact the rider's ability to register for future sessions.
- U Packets are due at minimum **2 weeks** prior to the start of the desired session in order to ride in that session.
- U Invoices will be sent by the sasi business office following the lesson confirmation.
Questions about your invoice should be directed to Elaine Mendrysa at emendrysa@sasinc.org, (716)-805-1555.



High Hurdles Participant Handbook

Schedule Information

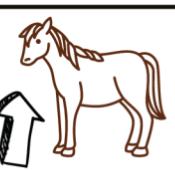
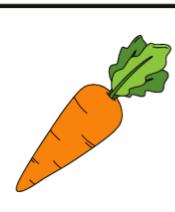
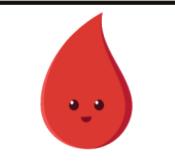
- U Please select at least 3 schedule options and put a ★ next to your most preferred time. If you do not have at least 3 options, we may not be able to accommodate your availability.
- U Riders new to us will be scheduled for a brief orientation the week prior to the first week of classes.
- U Please consider the typical weather/season when making your session selection.
- U Note that we do not follow all holiday closures.
- U We will make every effort to place riders in their preferred lesson time but will also select classes based on variables such as horse availability, level of independence and group dynamics.

Lesson Fees/Payment Options

8-week session: \$400

- U Our lessons are structured as 4, 8-week sessions throughout the year (1-hour weekly).
- U New to the 2025 season! We are offering Winter Mini sessions! (see website for details)
- U Our fees are able to stay well below the actual cost of a lesson with the help of generous donors, grants and fundraising. We do understand however that these costs may be out of reach for some and we have options for those that qualify.
 - **Family Support Service Program** - for those eligible with OPWDD who live at home with family. See more information on our website. Costs differ from the out-of-pocket costs and eligibility requirements apply. Your care coordinator and team may be able to assist you. Riders are eligible for **ONE** session through FSS.
 - **Scholarship** - based on financial need, and when funds are available (this is donor funded).










	<p>ATTIRE: ASTM-SEI certified horseback riding helmet (if a rider has their own helmet, the manufacture date must be within five years) Close toed shoes such as sneakers or boots, long pants, no dangling jewelry or hard stuff in pockets. Dress appropriately for the weather. EVERYONE IN THE BARN MUST WEAR CLOSE TOED SHOES.</p>
	<p>LISTEN FOR INSTRUCTIONS AT ALL TIMES.</p>
	<p>DO NOT GO TO THE BARN WITHOUT AN INSTRUCTOR PRESENT.</p>
	<p>NO RUNNING, YELLING OR "HORSEPLAY". KEEP OFF OF MOUNTING RAMP.</p>
	<p>DO NOT OPEN A STALL DOOR WITHOUT A VOLUNTEER OR INSTRUCTOR PRESENT.</p>
	<p>WALK IN FRONT OF THE HORSES TO GO AROUND, NOT BEHIND, AND DO NOT DUCK UNDER THEIR NECK.</p>
	<p>ASK BEFORE GIVING A TREAT TO ANY HORSE. Some are on restricted diets. Always give treats with a bucket, not with your hand. Keep fingers away from the horses' mouths.</p>
	<p>DO NOT TOUCH BLOOD ON A HORSE OR A HUMAN - tell an instructor, staff or volunteer.</p>
	<p>NO OUTSIDE ANIMALS ARE ALLOWED ON THE PROPERTY, with the exception of service dogs under the control of their handler.</p>
	<p>PLEASE FOLLOW ALL SAFETY SIGNS POSTED ON THE PROPERTY. THE SPEED LIMIT IS 5MPH.</p>












High Hurdles Facility Rules and Safety Information

Respect Respect Safety Safety Safety

	THE EMERGENCY WORD IS HALT, see "In case of emergency" section.
	THE BARN CELL PHONE IS AVAILABLE FOR USE IN EMERGENCIES.
	PARENT/GUARDIAN/STAFF MUST REMAIN ON SITE for the entirety of the lesson, except in rare circumstances where the rider is their own legal guardian or is also a volunteer.
	NO ONE SHOULD BE IN THE LESSON AREA EXCEPT FOR THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN HELPING WITH THE LESSON. Spectators should stay in the designated viewing areas in the classroom and the bench in front of the bathroom. They should remain quiet to keep riders focused and lessons safe. Thank you for your cooperation!
	BE KIND AND GENTLE TO HORSES, PEOPLE, CATS, ETC. TREAT OTHERS THE WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED.
	HELP EACH OTHER
	PUT EQUIPMENT AWAY AND BE GENTLE WITH IT.



High Hurdles Miscellaneous Information

	FAMILIES/STAFF SHOULD COME PREPARED TO SIDEWALK AS NECESSARY (WEARING CLOSE TOED SHOES).
	<p>VOLUNTEERS: Our volunteers generously donate their time to our riders and program. How volunteers work at High Hurdles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are trained to offer the level of support that each rider needs, and on how to handle our horses. They are responsible for supporting the rider and answer to the supervising instructor. • We try to place the same volunteer with each rider week to week, but this may change for various reasons. • We schedule lessons and volunteers as needed with each rider. Please let us know with a minimum 24hr notice if you will be absent so that we can inform them.
	SIGN IN WHEN YOU ARRIVE, AND OUT WHEN YOU LEAVE.
	LANTERNS ARE AVAILABLE IF THE POWER GOES OUT.
	FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ARE BY THE MAIN DOOR IN THE ARENA AND HAY STORAGE AREAS.
	BREAKER BOXES ARE IN THE HAY STORAGE AREA IN THE BARN AND IN THE STORAGE AREA OF THE ARENA.
	THERE ARE FIRST AID KITS IN THE BATHROOM AND IN THE TACK ROOM.
	WIFI IS AVAILABLE- PASSWORD CHANGES FREQUENTLY
	PLEASE PARK IN FRONT OF THE BARN, KEEP CIRCLE CLEAR FOR THOSE IN WHEELCHAIRS, AND VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH SPOT AVAILABLE



High Hurdles Policies

Weight Limit Policy



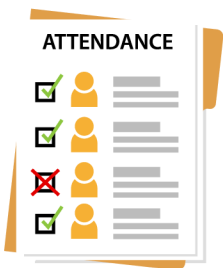
Each horse has a set weight limit based on their size, age, physical condition and health. Our upper weight limit is 200lbs, however be aware that we have limited horses that can accommodate this weight and their availability may be limited. Our weight limit also takes into consideration our volunteers and staff to ensure their safety and ability to aid a rider as needed. Riders over 175lb should need minimal assistance from a side walker. Those that are outside of these limits are welcome to join in off-horse lessons. We reserve the right to weigh a participant to ensure the safety of our equine staff.

Contraindications

As a facility we follow PATH Int'l guidelines for therapeutic riding, which includes guidelines on who is a candidate to participate on horseback or in the barn. Though not common, we may have to decline providing services to an applicant for their own safety. Horseback riding is an inherently dangerous activity that can exacerbate preexisting conditions even in a normal lesson. We may also have to decline an applicant due to our own ability to accommodate their needs.



Attendance Policy



Lessons are structured such that there are several people (and horses) that are involved in each lesson. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a lesson (24hrs is best) so that we can prepare the team. Many of our volunteers drive up to an hour to help with lessons. If a rider misses 2 lessons without contact, they will have no make up credit issued and may forfeit their spot to allow another rider into the program. If a rider misses 3 lessons with contact, they may also forfeit their spot for the session. If a rider is more than 15 minutes late to a lesson, they will be unable to be on-horse during that lesson and will be counted as present. See make-up policy. Text or call (716) 548-0004 to keep us informed!



High Hurdles Policies



Cancellation Policy

Our program aims to give riders a broad education in horsemanship and riding, and as such may include off horse lessons as needed for weather or unforeseen circumstances. Lessons WILL BE occurring unless you are contacted directly by High Hurdles staff. Staff will send notification to your indicated preferred method of contact as soon as possible.

Questions regarding this policy can be directed to Shelby Dytschkowskyj.

Due to the nature of the program, working with volunteers and live animals, we are unable to make up for missed lessons except in the circumstances as listed below.

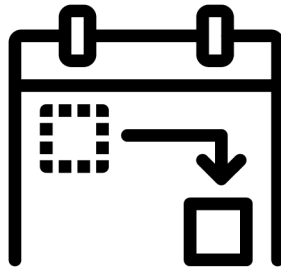
Weather Related Cancellations:

Lessons may be cancelled or adjusted at the discretion of High Hurdles and its instructors (see below guidelines). Instructors may choose to do classroom activities and education, groundwork, grooming, horsemanship education, etc. as appropriate for each rider. If an unmounted lesson is not appropriate you will be given a weather make-up lesson, to be scheduled at an agreeable time. This decision will be at the discretion of the instructor and rider/caregiver.

- Ⓢ Lessons will be cancelled in the event of a travel ban in Erie, Wyoming or Cattaraugus counties, depending on the affected riders' locations. Cancellation for a weather event will otherwise be based on High Hurdles' location.
- Ⓢ Lessons will be cancelled when Pioneer Schools are closed for weather.
- Ⓢ A decision will be made, and riders/volunteers notified about cancelling at least 2 hours prior to the start of a lesson.
- Ⓢ Off horse lessons will be conducted in the following weather circumstances:
 - Temperature below 20 degrees or above 85 degrees, subject to change due to wind chill and humidity.
 - Unsafe weather events as determined by staff. Thunder and lightning in ear/eye shot.



High Hurdles Policies



Make-Up Policy

Weather Make-Ups:

- Lessons will be made up in the event of weather conditions that deem it necessary to cancel lessons entirely.
- If a rider chooses to cancel based on weather and High Hurdles remains open, no make-up will be issued.

High Hurdles Make-Ups:

- A make-up credit will be issued when High Hurdles cancels a lesson for any reason. (e.g. staffing or volunteer availability, horse emergencies, etc.)
 - We ask that families and staff come prepared to sidewalk as necessary to limit volunteer shortages from affecting lessons.
- In an event that High Hurdles is unable to provide a make-up lesson within one session, you will be refunded the cost of the missed lesson(s).

Medical/Emergency Make-Ups:

- A make-up will be offered in the event of a major medical illness or emergency including hospitalization or surgeries.
- We are unable to make up lessons for common illnesses due to limitations in the scheduling of staff, volunteers and horses. We do ask, however that if you are sick you stay home to protect those involved in lessons, including other riders.

Pre-Approved Absence Make-Ups:

- Up to one lesson may be made up for a scheduled absence, so long as the absence is advised prior to the start of the session to Shelby Dytschkowskyj.

Make up credits are not reimbursable and must be used within one session after the cancellation.



High Hurdles Emergency Procedures



Emergency During a Mounted Lesson: Our emergency word is **HALT**. Anyone can call halt. If halt is called, everyone stops and waits for direction from the instructor.

HALT WE NEED TO EVACUATE: When this is called, all riders will be dismounted as quickly as possible. Leaders will take the horses back to the barn or pasture and take off tack. Everyone meets in the grass circle in front of the arena. The sign in book will be taken by an instructor for attendance.



IN THE EVENT THAT 911 NEEDS TO BE CALLED, instructions are on the back of the office door and next to the tack room door to give to the operator.

1. Sidewalkers and leaders will stay with their rider and horse.
2. All horses will be moved away from the incident. Leaders/Sidewalkers will keep their riders/horses that are not involved calm.
3. Sidewalkers are responsible to their rider, leaders are responsible to the horse.
4. Instructor will direct each person involved in the lesson to help emergency dismount, as necessary. Volunteers are trained to dismount riders.
5. Family/staff should wait for direction BEFORE entering the arena to avoid any safety concerns with the horses.
6. Riders will be directed to their families/caregivers.
7. If the emergency involved a rider, they will be dismounted, horses will be removed and rider attended to.
8. If needed, the instructor will direct someone to call 911 and get the first aid kit.
9. Leaders will take horses back to the barn and untack them, or to the pasture if the emergency is in the barn.
10. An incident report will be completed with all witnesses included.



High Hurdles

Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and thoroughly read through the Participant Handbook and understand the policies and procedures within it. I agree to abide by the rules outlined in the handbook and if I have questions or concerns, I will bring them up to the Director of the Program as they arise. I have read and understand the weather, cancellation and attendance policies and agree to abide by them for the duration of my involvement in High Hurdles programming. I agree to come prepared to sidewalk as needed for my rider or another rider in their class, assuming I am physically able.

By acknowledging this, I recognize the importance of ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants, staff and volunteers and horses involved in the therapeutic riding program.

Participant

Family/Caregiver Name

Relationship to Participant

Family/Caregiver Signature

Date