



The Pony club Association of New South Wales Incorporated

Workplace Health & Safety Pony Club Induction Policy

As approved by State Executive November 2014

Version 1.00

1. Introduction

New members and volunteers at Pony Club who new to horses or have not interacted with horse before including young or beginner riders need support and assistance to develop their skills and confidence to safely interact with horses.

It is important that all members and volunteers follow the rules and procedures of the Pony Club Association including all Club and Zone by-laws which may apply. It is especially important that older members with greater experience or advances skills follow these rules and procedures as those learning are likely to copy their behaviour.

People learn best by seeing something done and when experienced members demonstrate the proper execution of skills they will make it easier for new and inexperienced members and others to put the actions into practice correctly.

2. Induction

The induction process is an important step in ensuring that new and inexperienced members receive instruction in the vital areas of health and safety risks in the Pony Club environment.

The Induction process should provide information about:

- Horse instincts and their response to fear
- How to behave around horses
- How to use peripheral vision when handling animals
- Determining an escape route when working close to horses
- How to recognise a horse's individual characteristics
- What riders and horse handlers should wear (see Pony Club uniform and safety gear)
- Listening to and obeying instructions
- First aid and emergency procedures
- Any local policies or by-laws including horse free areas, expectations of riders and club facilities

Some people at Pony Club may only be present for a short period of time so it is important the induction training and the explanation of safe practices and procedures covers essential information to ensure their safety.

The induction will include an assessment of the riding skills of the new members (assessed by a qualified instructor). All new members and volunteers / parents at Pony Club will be treated as new to the horse environment unless they can demonstrate otherwise.

The knowledge and skills of new people should be assessed individually, as people may have a history of handling or riding horse but may have developed unsafe habits. New members and volunteers should be assessed in a safe fenced, level and enclosed area.

New or inexperienced members should be regularly monitored to ensure they understand the information provided.

The Induction will also include (but not be limited to) the following Pony Club rules that everyone is expected to obey. These rules could include:

- No walking up to a horse in its kicking zone
- If walking behind a horse, walk close with a hand on its rump
- A rope which is attached to a horse should not be wrapped around a person's hand
- The reins of a bridle on a horse should not be wrapped around a person's arm, wrist, neck or body
- No ducking under the neck of a tied up horse
- No squatting down or sitting in front of any horse
- No rough handling of horses.
- Horse free areas
- Safe food handling
- Appropriate closed in footwear worn at all times. i.e. riding boots (see gear section of the Associations Handbook for more details on approved boots)
- Helmets when worn must be done up correctly at all times

3. Safe Work Procedures

Developing clear, simple and effective safe procedures can play an important part in helping people interact with horses safely.

Some safe procedures will apply to members, parents and volunteers at Pony Club, for example the safe mounting of horses. Other safe procedures may only apply to some members and the tasks that they perform, for example driving a tractor or ride on lawn mower.

Prior to any new member or volunteer being asked to perform a new task, the task must be explained to the new person. If they have not performed the task before, it should be done under direct supervision at least the first time.

There are several essential safe work procedures that new members, parents and volunteers at Pony Club should be regularly instructed in. These safe practices should be enforced at Pony Club and include how to:

- Approach a horse and avoid their blind spots and kicking zones
- Access and work around a horse in a stable/yard or enclosed area
- Lead horses through narrow places
- Tie up horses – including to a horse float
- Lead a horse around cars and horse floats
- Standing and holding several horses (for example whilst riders are doing a jump course walk)
- Tacking up horses
- Waiting when mounted in a group of horses
- Mount and wait while others are mounting
- Go through gear check and have their gear inspected
- Slow and stop a horse by using the reins, legs and body position
- Work around a tethered horse
- Rug and un-rug horses
- Feed horses, and

- Address other related hazards both in confined areas and in a group

4. Instructors and supervisors

Pony Club encourages all adult volunteers to become accredited instructors and pony club provides a number of pathways for members, these include:

- Renewal of existing Instructors and Examiners Certificates
- Introductory Instructors Certificate
- Gear Check Certificate
- Free State run Instructors Schools
- Mentors
- National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) Introductory, Level 1 and specialist (mounted games)

Full details of how to become a qualified instructor can be found on the Associations website under the coaching tab.

Supervisors and instructors responsible for new and inexperienced riders and volunteers / parents need to understand their special needs. Supervisors and instructors need to be qualified and be able to confidently communicate enough information about safety at Pony Club and be able to ensure riders and volunteers are safe. Both the Club Safety Officer and the Horse Welfare Officer should move around the Pony Club grounds to observe and ensure safe procedures are being followed. The level of supervision will depend on:

- Ratios of instructors to horses and riders
- Skills and qualifications of instructors or supervisors
- Horse temperament and training
- Type of riding or horse handling being undertaken
- Aptitude and age of riders and others
- The environment in which the activity is undertaken.

The Association have a number of resources available via the Associations website to assist new members and volunteers these are:

- Pony Club Association NSW Handbook
- Riding Book
- The Instructors Handbook
- NCAS preliminary and Level 1 workbooks and log books
- Certificate workbooks and manuals
- Club resources
- Pony Club NSW association website

Other suitable resources include:

- J Myers – Horse Safe a Complete Guide to Equine Safety, Landlinks Press, Australia.
- Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses – Safework Australia. June 2014

5. Fit for purpose horse

While new members must in most cases have their own horse to attend Pony Club, instructors and officials must still be satisfied that this horse is suitable for a new or inexperienced rider and their parent's skill level.

New and inexperienced riders should always start on a quiet, steady horse. The horse should be well educated and trained to slow down in response to pressure on the reins. Horses that have previously been from a race track without extensive re-training are unsuitable for inexperienced riders.

Pony Club officials and instructors should be familiar with the characteristics of horses and how horses react to different types of riders and likely situations it will face, for example riders behaving inappropriately or the need to stand still without getting restless. If in open areas the horse needs to be calm around other horses or traffic. A qualified instructor or official must individually assess every new rider and horse combination. This includes new members and current members with new (to Pony Club) horses.

Instructors should not permit new or inexperienced riders to ride unsuitable horses at Pony Club that:

- Are nervous or reactive
- Have a tendency to rear, buck, pigroot, bite people or horses, kick people when being handled or ridden, shy, bolt or any other behaviour which might unseat an unbalanced rider.
- Are non-compliant and unresponsive
- Regularly trip or stumble
- Has been from a race track without extensive re-training

6. Paperwork and forms

When all members join the Pony Club Association, they are required to be given a site specific induction. They should read this form and have the various sections explained to them. They are required to sign the site induction form (which is to be kept at the Pony Club) and tick the relevant box on the membership form. They are also required to complete a risk waiver form each year and upon joining must abide by all Pony Club rules and policies, copies of which may be found on the Pony Club Association website www.pcansw.org.au under the policy tab.