



## **Riding Lesson Information Packet**

Thank you for choosing Springwood Station to accomplish your riding goals! Our purpose is to produce safe and confident riders using fun and creative teaching methods. In addition to riding, our students will learn from our “Whole Horse Experience” using the ***Equine Foundations Course*** offered with our lesson program. Learn to groom, tack your horse, anatomy, conformation, and ground work skills. The courses offer certificates and ribbon awards to track your progress at systematic intervals.

We teach all of our students ***Safety First*** and apply principles from a horse training background with emphasis on “learning horse psychology” to become “one” with your horse. We aim to set you up for horse ownership if you so desire.

In this packet you will find frequently asked questions, what to wear, pricing along with barn guidelines and liability waiver. Lesson liability waivers MUST be filled out and signed before your first lesson begins at Springwood Station.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in this packet. Emails, texts or calls will be answered as soon as possible.

Happy Trails!  
Springwood Station Staff

springwoodstation@comcast.net  
804-746-4072



## **Lesson Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What types of lessons do you teach?**

A. Our lessons are based upon a “balanced seat” and a “secure seat”. We teach beginner, intermediate and advanced Western Lessons. Emphasis is placed on correct position in the saddle, control of your mount and safety through true horsemanship. Learning horse psychology and training techniques will also be discussed. Other areas include horse management, training, and riding to prepare you for ownership of your own horse. Consideration is given to the student in the very beginning to chart your own course of learning...However - we do so by practicing safety protocol for whichever learning path you wish to take. **All riding lessons are private or small groups of 2-3 max people at a time** to help with your concentration and have the ability to ask all questions you may have.

### **Q. What is the dress code for riding?**

A. Helmets (ASTM/SEI certified) must be worn by all children 17 and under. Helmets are strongly suggested for all adults. Boots with a heel (atleast ½ or more) are required so your foot does not slip thru the stirrups while riding. Tennis shoes are not recommended. Jeans and/or riding breeches can be worn. No shorts, capri pants or baggy sweat pants. Hair should be pulled back out of your face. No dangling jewelry. No chewing gum while riding.

**Note - Bicycle helmets do not offer adequate protection as an ASTM/SEI Certified Riding Helmet does.**

### **Q. Where can I purchase any of these items?**

A. Local stores that carry helmets, boots, and riding attire:

Champion Saddlery      [www.championsaddlery.com](http://www.championsaddlery.com)  
15225 Breedens Rd  
Doswell, VA 23047      804-227-3434

Changing Reins      [www.changingreinsinc.com](http://www.changingreinsinc.com)  
102 S. Railroad Ave  
Ashland, VA 23005      804-752-6782

Tractor Supply and Southern States may also carry a limited supply of helmets and boots.

Online Resources:

[www.doversaddlery.com](http://www.doversaddlery.com)

[www.smartpak.com](http://www.smartpak.com)

[www.statelinetack.com](http://www.statelinetack.com)

[www.sstack.com](http://www.sstack.com)

[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

### **Q. What ages do you accept?**

A. Children must be at least 8 years old to start riding at Springwood Station.  
All adults are welcome.

**Q. Is there a weight limit?**

A. Yes – 220lbs for the rider only.

**Q. Can I leave my child during a lesson and come back later?**

A. We strongly discourage this – please stay for the hour your child will be riding. We do not allow children 17 and under to be left at the farm unattended for any reason.

**Q. How many lessons will it take to be a skilled horse person?**

A. There is no set limit for what you are willing to learn. The extreme basics can take as little as 5 lessons but you will not know enough to go and purchase a horse for yourself. Everyone learns at a different pace and all horses can be very different from one another. Horsemanship can take years or even a life time depending what you would like to learn and to what severity.

**Q. Do you teach anything other than Western?**

A. We teach primarily western and this is where all of our students start - however – you can switch riding disciplines to hunter, english, or dressage after riding with us for awhile. Some like to see what other types are out there and try them out. Our horses are well versed in several disciplines – not only western. We **do not** offer any **jumping or trail riding** within our **lesson program**.

**Q. What type of horses do you use and how are they trained?**

A. All of our horses are purebred Arabians, ½ Arabian ½ Quarter Horse crosses and Quarter Horse. They all have had several years of professional training and showing. Many of them have won National and Regional wins. We use horses that have unflappable dispositions and can withstand the rigors of multiple daily riders and are forgiving of the beginning rider's learning curve. We use only the best equipment that is out on the market. We take great care in picking the best horse suited for our students. We align the abilities of the student and their level of riding to coincide with the level of horse used. Depending on length of time you ride with us – you may ride several horses with differing abilities.

**Q. When can I lease a horse from Springwood Station?**

A. We offer our riding students first choice of leasing when a horse becomes available. A minimum of 20 lessons is a pre-requisite to leasing unless you have previous riding or ownership experience. We ask that you are also enrolled in our lesson program during the first 3 months of your lease – at the client/boarder discounted rate.

**Q. Do you offer group riding lessons or just private riding lessons?**

A. Springwood Station does offer private lessons for the purpose of charting your individual learning curriculum. Our private lessons are catered to what you would like to learn and plenty of question/answer time throughout the lesson. You can learn at your pace and not someone else's. This also is done as a **huge safety precaution** to our younger riders and less confident riders – so we can stay close to them while in the saddle with no other student interaction. Our assessment lessons are also done as a private lesson (45 min) to be able to ask any and all things to get you set on your learning journey.

We also offer group lessons of 2-3 people max. These are kept small for the same reason – to have everyone involved in learning and not feeling overwhelmed or left out. Question/answer periods throughout the 1 hour lesson to get to your goal.

**Q. What kind of fitness level do I need to have - in regard to riding horses?**

A. Fitness level for beginner riders must start with:

- 1 - have average arm strength
- 2 - no shortness of breath
- 3 - must be able to mount/dismount the horse **without hesitation**

\*\* Please let us know of any physical issues, allergies, or limitations you may have before purchasing lessons.

**Q. Are there opportunities to ride outside of the ring?**

A. All of our riding lessons will take place in the riding ring – we do not do anything outside of the ring such as trail riding within the lesson program.

**Q. Are there opportunities for unmounted lessons and/or horse care?**

We also have inside barn lessons – our BarnWorx program with grooming, saddling, nutrition etc. Mane Event Clinics and specific group programs sponsored by Equine Foundations.

**Q. Do you offer trail riding for anyone?**

A. We **do not** offer any kind of trail riding or horse rentals for anyone other than our boarding clients. Insurance does not allow this unless you own the horse you are riding.

**Q. Can I do barn work in exchange for my lessons?**

A. Unfortunately not – our insurance does not allow this.

**Q. How do I schedule a lesson?**

A. Please email or call for our current availabilities as they can change quickly.

If there are no times available on the scheduling calendar PLEASE EMAIL US as we sometimes have cancellation that is not posted and can get you scheduled thru email.

All lessons are to be PAID in advance before a time can be scheduled.

\*\*Keep in mind our schedule remains full most of the year so it may take 2-4+ weeks to schedule a new rider into a time slot – as we usually have a waiting list.

**Q. What does a LESSON include?**

We are on an AUTO PAY system where your commitment is for the whole month. This includes 4 lessons and 1 Mane Event Clinic which is held on 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month 6-7pm for an unmounted type lesson. This is a group lesson that all students can attend together.

Group lessons are 1 Hour – Private lessons are 45 minutes. You will spend the lesson grooming/tacking/ground work/riding and after lesson care. In the event of poor riding conditions we will be holding class in the barn for a BarnWorx lesson. Sick days/vacation days or severe weather – curriculum will be emailed to you to complete before the next lesson.

**Q. How do I cancel a lesson?**

A. Please email/text or call at least 12 hours ahead of scheduled ride time if you know you will not be able to make the lesson in person so we can email you curriculum to complete before the next session.

**Q. What are the lesson days and times?**

A. Current time frames :

Monday – Thursday evenings 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Saturday afternoons starting at 2pm in cooler weather (Nov - April)

Saturday mornings starting at 10am in warmer weather (May - Oct)

Mane Event Clinic – 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of month 6-7pm

Our online calendar will show open timeframes available – **if no dates are present, we do not have any current openings** – however this can change daily due to cancellations. Email us directly if you are looking for certain timeframes.

**Q. At times of inclement weather – how will I know if we will be doing lessons or not?**

A. You will be contacted either by email, text or phone if the weather is too severe.

Most notifications are by 1pm day of the lesson (weekdays) – the remainder being by 5pm at the latest during quick changing weather patterns.

Weekend lessons notifications will be as soon as possible within a 2+ hour range preferably so you can make alternate plans when necessary.

See *Weather Policy* on the next page.

**Q. Do you offer lesson packages?**

A. Our package is for one month at a time – we no longer sell “pay as you go” packages of lessons. You may enroll in the monthly lesson package on our website using Paypal – this is a recurring autopay program until you no longer wish to join. **We do not give refunds on lesson packages**– so please make sure you have any questions answered or doubts discussed before you enroll. Take our 45 min private assessment lesson to be sure of your level of commitment to the program.

**Q: Do you offer horse showing/coaching/training to lesson participants?**

A: We offer this to leasing clients and clients with their own horse.

Lesson participants do not have as much time in the saddle that it takes to begin horse showing – so we suggest leasing when you get to this point.

## **Weather Policy for Lesson Participants**

Weather with horses can cause a great deal of havoc at times. Horses are just like dogs – they can be intimidated by weather patterns that we don’t always see. We consistently check weather conditions for Springwood Station to make the best possible judgment before you leave home for your lesson. We use [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) or [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com) are our main go-to sources for weather information.

We always side with the weatherman and their predictions – even though they are wrong quite a bit of the time. Here are the main weather patterns that we cancel lessons for the day:

**In extreme heat –**

We do not ride if the temperature is 95 degrees or hotter - AT STARTING RIDE TIME (6pm on weekdays)

**In extreme cold –**

We do not ride if the temperature is 45 degrees or colder – AT STARTING RIDE TIME (6pm on weekdays)

Rainy conditions – muddy conditions – standing water

Severe humid conditions

Lightning strikes/Impending Storms

Windy conditions

## **Lesson Rules**

- No running, screaming or any horseplay around the horses either in the barn or near the riding ring. Supervision is required for all children (whether riding or not) is the responsibility of the parent while on the premises.
- No smoking on Springwood Station property.
- Pin back all hair from your face – use ponytail holder for long hair. No loose jewelry.
- No chewing gum or candy while riding.
- Helmets must be worn by all children – see our riding attire policy in FAQ area.
- Never wrap the lead rope or reins around your hand while handling any horse.
- No riding back to the barn.
- Never stand directly behind any horse.
- Please be on time for your lesson – If you show up late – your time will be deducted from your lesson.
- Please help us by adhering to all rules and act as safely as possible while visiting Springwood Station. We aim to teach you a “safe” way to interact with and around horses. Be advised - you may be asked to leave the premises if you do not conduct yourself in a safe manner.

Please review the following Rider Liability Waiver on the next page – this form needs to be filled out and brought back with you when you arrive for your first lesson.



## **RELEASE OF LIABILITY OWNER/RIDER**

WITNESS THIS AGREEMENT by and between Springwood Station and the aforesigned, hereinafter referred to as MANAGER and RIDER. For consideration received, and in return for the use, today and on all future dates of the property, facilities and services of Manager, Rider, Rider's heirs, assigns, and representatives, hereby agree as follows:

1. **Inherent Risks and Assumption of Risk.** The undersigned acknowledges there are inherent risks associated with equine activities such as described below, and hereby expressly assumes all risks associated with participating in such activities. The inherent risks include, but are not limited to the propensity of equines to behave in ways such as, running, bucking, biting, kicking, shying, stumbling, rearing, falling or stepping on, that may result in an injury, harm or death to persons on or around them; the unpredictability of equine's reaction to such things as sounds, sudden movement and unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals; certain hazards such as surface and subsurface conditions; collisions with other animals; the limited availability of emergency medical care; and the potential of a participant to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to the participant or others, such as failing to maintain control over the animal or not acting within such participant's ability.

Rider acknowledges that horses, by their very nature are unpredictable and subject to animal whim. Rider assumes all risks in connection therewith, and expressly waives any claims for any injury or loss arising there from. Rider agrees to abide by and follow Manager's rules and regulations which, shall be posted and/or available from time to time. Rider further acknowledges that the behavior of any animal is contingent to some extent upon the ability of Rider. Rider assumes all risks therefore and warrants a full and fair disclosure of Rider's abilities has been made to Manager.

Rider expressly releases Manager from any and all claims for personal injury or property damage, even if caused by negligence (if allowed by the laws of this State) by Manager or its representatives, agents or employees.

**Warning**

**Under Virginia Law, an equine activity sponsor or an equine professional shall not be liable for an injury to or death of a participant engaged in an equine activity resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to Va. Code Ann. §3.1-796.132.**

2. Rider agrees to hold harmless, indemnify and defend Manager against, and hold harmless from, any and all claims, demands, causes of action, damages, judgments, orders, costs or expenses, including attorney's fees, whether actually incurred or not, which may in any way arise from or be in any way connected with Rider's use of or presence upon the property of Manager and the facilities located thereon.
3. In the event Rider is using Rider's own horse, or a horse(s) not owned by Manager, Rider warrants said horse(s) shall be free from infection, contagious or transmittable diseases. Manager reserves the right to refuse access or use of any horse upon the premises that does not appear to Manager to be in good health, or is deemed dangerous or undesirable.
4. Any action brought under this agreement shall be brought within three (3) months of the incident or accident giving rise to said claim. Rider agrees that damages shall be limited to \$250 for property damage, actual expenses incurred, and a maximum of \$2500 for damages such as pain and suffering.
5. Rider agrees to waive the protection of any applicable statutes in this jurisdiction whose purpose, substance and/or effect is to provide that a general release shall not extend to claims, material or otherwise, which the person giving the release does not know or suspect to exist at the time of executing said release.

Rider Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian for child)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_