

# Horseback Riding Lessons Information for the School Year Program at Fleet Equestrian Center, LLC

Head Instructor Margaret Fleet

## 1. Price of Lessons and Payments

Cash, Check, or PayPal, Venmo, Cashapp online are all appropriate methods of payment.

Please make all checks Payable to Margaret Fleet or Fleet Equestrian Center.

Lessons are paid for by the time or can be purchased up to 4-at-a-time, with the instructor *and* purchaser keeping track of lesson usage per time. Lessons are kept track of, in the account book in the method of: 1 Of 4V, 2 of 4V, 3 of 4V etc. Any unused lessons if paying ahead (4 at a time) expire in 6 months, if the client leaves and then returns to the barn.

## All Group Lessons (Scheduled for 3-6 riders)

For all students the price of group lessons are currently **discounted!**

**\$40 per person (Regular price: \$55-per person/lesson).**

\*\*\*More details about additional lesson prices can be found on the website for semi-private, private, and specialty lessons.

## 2. Extra Riding Time

1. Additional group lessons: \$40 per lesson.
2. Practice Rides: for Mid-Intermediate or better riders prices are listed on the website..

## 3. Length of Lesson

**Regular Group Lessons ages 8+:** lessons last for one and a half hours up to two hours from arrival to departure (depending on group size) which includes catching, grooming and saddling time and riding time, untacking, returning horse to area.

\*\*\*\*Ride time is 45 minutes-65 minutes depending on number of riders in the group.

**Semi-Private Lessons ages 8+:** lessons last for one hour and 15 minutes to one hour 45 minutes depending on which length of lesson you request. The typical semi-private lesson is 45 minute ride time with the rest of the time for tacking and grooming.

**Private lessons:** lessons last 45 minutes up to about one hour and a half from arrival to departure.

Ride time is - 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, 60 minutes and include grooming and tacking time depending on the selected length of lesson.

## 4. Arrival Time

Students may arrive up to 15 minutes before the scheduled start of class unless instructed otherwise.

## 5. Grooming/Tacking Time

For Novice- Intermediate Group Lessons: You may catch your horse upon arrival with instructor permission. You may take a fellow student or parent to supervise and to help catch your horse or you can wait for the instructor to help.

For Beginner to Novice Group Lessons, you may arrive early and wait for your horse to be caught or go with the instructor, parent, or other student(s) to catch your horse. Your instructor will tell you what would be helpful for you to do while you wait to groom.

## 6. Gate Code

The gate is not meant to be pushed open. Please enter code. Please call or text for code if you don't have it. Gate will stay open until code is entered again.

## 7. Months of Lessons

The lesson program runs from Mid August/September through May (with breaks following the public school schedule for major holidays).

## 8. Summer Lessons

There is weekly riding during the summer, on a different and limited schedule, at a rate of \$40 per lesson.

## 9. Dates of schedule changes

Class times may change slightly with the time changes or at a later date in the fall, by moving up or down by 1 hour. 6:30pm or later lessons will not run in the Winter due to the cold temperatures.

## 10. What You Will Learn-Riding Philosophy

For English and Western- riding lessons will consist of:

**Flat work** - walk-trot-canter, with an emphasis on control of horse, body positioning, and balance. Dressage is the basis for our riding philosophies; it provides a general balanced seat and proper body positioning. Dressage is excellent for all riding disciplines and will serve you or your child well, whatever future path they choose in riding.

**Jumping** is limited to the abilities of each horse. Students who choose to ride English will eventually be able to learn how to jump. Western riders will learn two-point position and will be able to go over trot poles and/or small jumps but they will not jump "high" in a western saddle.

Students, please do not ask to jump higher than it has been determined is safe for your horse. There are hunter/jumper barns in the surrounding area that will allow you to EVENTUALLY jump higher than you will be allowed to jump here. These barns are usually high dollar (at least double the lesson fees) and they will take their time before allowing you to jump high. The reason for this is safety, the barns income coming from you, and the value of their horses that they too, do not want to see ruined for reckless and unnecessary reasons. Good lesson horses are very hard to replace.

## 11. Horse Shows

All Students enrolled in and regularly attending weekly lessons, will have the opportunity to participate in Farm Shows 1-2 times a year, in the academy portion of the show for FEC students. No open show classes are guaranteed to any student.

Why Show? Showing gives students an opportunity to learn and grow because each judge has a subjective opinion and a different perspective on their riding ability. I strongly recommend taking advantage of this low cost showing option, so that your child can decide if showing may be something they want to work towards.

Showing makes horses and riders nervous, these practice shows can really help to improve a student's confidence and can teach them some valuable life lessons about competition, self-worth, and determination.

### Show Team

Show team riders are hand-selected by the head instructor based on the rider's ability and readiness to deal with the stress of competition at off property (open) shows. Not all riders who wish to show will be chosen to show.

Our biggest goal in picking students to show is our concern for safety based on what we know about the stress of competition for horse and rider. Some trainers may let your child show sooner despite safety concerns but we wish to avoid creating negative experiences whenever possible.

### Off Property Horse Shows – open shows.

Any rider who wishes to show must: regularly attend all weekly group lessons, must be able to tack completely unaided, and must be able to come get their horse and tack ready before the show, usually Friday. Any prep work that has to be done by the instructors or other barn members will result in additional show fees. (a show bill will be generated for all open shows.)

## **12. \*\*\*\*Cancelations and Absences\*\*\*\***

Please let your instructor know if you are going to be absent from a lesson. Please call/email/text if you cannot make a lesson.

3 hour cancellation is required for all absences.

\*If you do not call or email (received by) 3 hours before your scheduled lesson, **\$10 payment (per rider) is expected** for your missed lesson. Please tack this fee onto your next lesson check, cash, or PayPal payment or send independently via online payment options.

If you do not tack this fee onto your next lesson amount, a bill will be generated and sent to you via email or text for the amount owed.

You may text or email anytime and call as late as 11pm on any given night, if you need to cancel a lesson.

**\*\*\*This allows time to schedule in riders waiting for spots to open for make-ups and allows the instructor to make schedule changes or cancelations for the day.\*\*\***

\*If you know days or weeks ahead of time, about an absence, your instructor will be glad to make note of it. Please write it down or email/text your instructor. Spoken words can't always be remembered during a busy class day.

\*If you are carpooling, please remember that your instructor still needs to know before you arrive that one or more of the riders will be absent, in case there are riders wanting a spot to make-up.

## **13. Instructor Absence or Cancellation**

Your instructor will do their best to be on time to lessons, to cancel as soon as possible for bad weather or emergencies, or to have a suitable substitute to teach the lesson.

**\*\*\*Instructor Cancellations for bad weather will be made around the 1hr mark, before a scheduled class.**

Cancelations are allowed at any time on a day that has been deemed iffy by the instructor for bad weather.

**It is understood, that sometimes emergencies happen on both the client's end and the instructor's end. These would include sickness, car trouble, and reasonable family emergencies, etc.**

## **14. Weather**

Weather Disclaimer: Lessons will be canceled for bad weather such as rain (thunder storms), extreme heat, wind & cold, or snow.

Lessons will be canceled if it the high for the day is 95 degrees or above (except for morning lessons) or with lower temperatures and high humidity. Please feel free to contact me with questions about cancelations. Sometimes it is raining in the local area but not in Edgemoor.

Good ways to plan for lesson cancelations...look at the following to determine:

### **Too Hot?**

**Relative Humidity** - If it **IS** or if it "feels like" over 95 one hour before lessons and the weather forecast does not foresee it cooling off, it's more than likely that we will cancel.

### **Too Cold?**

Lessons at the latest will run until 6:30pm in the winter, most lessons will be survivable for 1.5 hours of exposure. It will be below freezing on some nights during the winter. We will not ride if it is below 35° at the start time for lessons (latest start time is 4:45 in the winter). Morning lessons move later in the day during the winter, extreme cold may be a reason to cancel.

## **15. Parking / Drop-off**

Feel free to park anywhere in the grass or driveway area near the barn.

## **16. Friends**

Occasionally students will bring a visitor/ friend with them to lessons and will ask if they may ride. This is fine as long as there is an extra horse of appropriate ability level that will not be overused by riding in an extra lesson. Please inform me of any visitors wanting to ride ahead of time, so that I will be more likely to be able to accommodate them.

They will need to have a release form filled out before they can ride.

\*\*\*The party who brings the friend is responsible for paying for the friend at the time they ride.

\$30 per visit upon instructor approval.

Friends and family are always welcome to watch lessons.

Client/Participant assumes responsibility for all guests brought onto the property.

**17. No Parent Coaching** \*\*\*Please no sideline coaching during lessons\*\*\*

Parents often want to encourage their children while riding. Some parents may even feel the need to co-coach a lesson.

Please refrain from attempting to co-coach your child or children while they are riding. It is rude and will not be tolerated. Failure to respect this rule may result in the termination of the rider and their family from the barn.

This is a low pressure riding academy, focused on each individual's personal rate of advancement. Our goal is to offer high quality instruction at an affordable price. We have worked for many years to gather a safe herd of horses that maximize our ability to advance your child to a very proficient level in a relatively short amount of time. We offer a solid foundation, on which a rider can build and eventually move on to much higher priced, more focused riding discipline.

\*\*\*\*Please remember that each barn is different, each instructor's riding philosophy and approach to riding is different, and that no instructor wants you trying to coach over them or to be offering contradicting information to your child while they are riding a 1000lb + animal.

**18. Parents please do not encourage your child to do anything the instructor has not told them they may do.**

Going along with no side line coaching from parents: There are several horses that are NOT allowed to jump or jump high and some that are NOT allowed to canter a lot. Canter for long periods of time and over jumping are not allowed. These horses are the tools with which our farm makes a living. The horses are also our pets and we are responsible for their wellbeing and avoiding injury. It is reckless and unfair to encourage dangerous behavior on the program's horses, which would result in an injury or loss of our assets (the horses) or of your child. Please let the instructors teach your child and voice any concerns you may have via call, text, email, or conversation (after lesson time) to the instructors.

**For all reputable lesson barns the following is true:**

\*No instructor appreciates having a parent teach over them or give conflicting instructions to their students.

\*No horse owner or instructor appreciates a person who does not respect the animals being used for lessons.

\*A great deal of time and money is spent in choosing proper lesson horses and good ones are hard to find.

\*We know when to push a child and what is too much for a horse. We also know OUR horses and how they are trained, which may be different than the way other barns ride and train their horses. Please be respectful of our experience with our horses.

\*Please **DO** feel free to intercede **in the case of an emergency**, because safety is very important to us.

\*We do not allow our horses to be used for "rentals" or to be treated as such during lessons or practice rides. This means no hard riding.

\*\*\*Please help us to keep our costs down by encouraging safe riding, not reckless or careless riding.

**19. What happens if a client is not coming consistently to lessons and someone wants to consistently fill that spot?**

In the case of a spot being held by a client that is not attending regularly for a span of 1 month: if there is a new client that wants to fill the spot consistently, the student holding the desired spot, will be asked to call ahead in the future for any available space instead of holding a spot.

## **20. Barn Rules and Expectations – for students.**

Students should take pride in the equipment used at the barn. They should take ownership in the care of horses, saddles, and tack. The scouting idea, is that a property or site should be left in the same or better condition than when it was found. At our barn, this means that all equipment, brushes, lead ropes, and helmets, should be put away in their proper place. And all dirt and manure from your horse should be cleaned up before you leave.

-Please do not leave brushes in stalls, in the hallway, or on the back pad. Use a small brush caddy to take all of your needed grooming items to your tacking location and return your tack caddy to its proper place before leaving to ride.

-Always use a lead rope when moving your horse any distance. (Even a few feet).

- Put your helmet on before you bridle your horse, so that you don't have to leave your horse to go get it.

-You may give your horse 3 barn treats after their ride, or bring your own treats (apples, carrots -ok, no artificial sweeteners please). Please do not get extra barn treats or feed to your horse, or any other horse.

-Shut the bathroom door and tack room door if you are the last one to exit.

## **21. What students should be working towards**

There are two paths that students can take as they advance with their riding. First, students can work on their skills by advancing to more difficult horses. This will bring them up a level in some respects. The other path is to take a medium level horse, and make it look like its ready to go to a show tomorrow. Students should be working towards their own personal goals for horseback riding.

## **22. What younger children and beginner riders of any age can expect from lessons**

**Young children (under 7)** in the beginner lessons, can expect to spend the first several years at walk trot only. It is tempting to let young children canter too soon (and every once in a while they will by accident) but the rate of falls increases when speed increases. Since our goal is safety, please help your young children to understand, that they will not be cantering for a good amount of time after starting riding. If other riders in the child's group are cantering, it is because they have been deemed old enough or experienced enough to do so.

The instructor working with your child will determine the right time for them to start cantering and jumping.

**Older beginner riders** will canter sooner and progress faster than very young riders, due to their cognition and coordination.