

Date of issue	May 2012	Reviewed	Oct 2023	Next review	Oct 2025	Approved by	Board of Trustees
For	Employees, volunteers, students, visitors, members						



Entrance, Progression and Exit Policy (Waiting-list group members)

Introduction

Ride High aims to offer the service it provides to as many children and young people (hereinafter together referred to as “young people”) as possible. The scope of this aim is limited only by the following:

- the parameters of our charitable objects;
- the capacity of The Ride High Equestrian Centre (“RHEC”) to provide riding lessons, such lessons being a central part of our programme; and
- availability of funding.
- the capacity of the Centre to plan, prepare and deliver.

This Policy sets out the criteria for acceptance of young people to the Ride High programme, the duration of each young person’s membership and the circumstances in which young people might be excluded from membership.

The scope of this Policy is limited to those young people who qualify as “waiting-list group members” as defined below. We provide a similar programme to other young people who are nominated by their schools or other organisations, for a specific duration and purpose, but this Policy does not relate to this latter category of young people (see our Entrance, Progression and Exit Policy (school group members)).

Charitable objects

Our constitution states that our charitable objects are:

“To act as a resource for young people aged between 5 and 25 who are experiencing difficulties in their daily lives by organising programmes of physical, educational and other activities as a means of:

1. Advancing in life and helping young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals;
2. Advancing education;

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3. Providing recreational and leisure-time activity in the interest of social welfare for people living in the area of benefit who have need by reason of poverty or social and economic circumstances with a view to improving the conditions of life for such young persons.”

At least 50% of the young people attending Ride High must be living in the borough of Milton Keynes.

Up to 50% of the young people attending Ride High may be living in the counties of Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire provided that a financial contribution is made to Ride High either by the agency referring such young people to Ride High, or from some other source.

Entrance to Ride High as a “waiting-list group member”

If all of the following criteria (“the Entry Criteria”) are met, the young person in question qualifies for acceptance on to the Ride High programme as a “waiting-list group member”:

- (s)he has been referred to Ride High by either a professional or agency known to the young person;
- (s)he is aged between 5 and 25 years;
- (s)he resides within the Borough of Milton Keynes or in the counties of Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire;
- (s)he is disadvantaged (as defined below) and would benefit from the particular type of intervention offered by Ride High.

The term “disadvantaged” for these purposes refers to young people who are experiencing difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

- emotional welfare;
- behaviour;
- economic circumstances;

but the term excludes young people with special physical or other needs such that Ride High does not feel able to cater for them on the Ride High programme (at the discretion of the Children’s Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees), and young people otherwise disqualified from riding under RHEC’s rules.

The Entry Criteria must be satisfied at both the date of referral and the date on which the young person starts the Ride High programme.

For any young person satisfying the Entry Criteria who resides within the Borough of Milton Keynes, his/her place at Ride High may or may not be funded by the referring organisation or some other source (as agreed in advance with Ride High) but for any young person satisfying the Entry Criteria but who lives in the counties of Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire or

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Bedfordshire, a financial contribution is required to be made to Ride High either by the referring organisation or from some other source.

No young person who qualifies under the Entry Criteria will be accepted on to the Ride High programme until satisfactory completion of:

- our Child/Young Person Referral Form (to be completed by the referrer);
- our Parent/Carer Consent Form; and/or
- Self-Consent Form

In addition, the referrer must have completed our information sharing agreement. Furthermore, the young person(s)he must sign the Ride High Member's Agreement, which sets out the conditions of their membership.

It is our preference that a Ride High employee has met the young person before (s)he starts attending. Therefore where possible, a meeting at Ride High, school visit or home visit (in either case with a parent/carer and/or referrer present), will be arranged once a place is, or is due to become, available for that young person at Ride High so that an assessment of the young person's strengths and difficulties can be undertaken, and the young person's parent/carer and/or referrer can highlight any concerns. This will enable Ride High to complete, if appropriate, a risk assessment (see further below) before the young person starts at Ride High. Such a visit or meeting may lead Ride High to conclude that we are not able to help the young person and this decision will be communicated as soon as possible to the referrer.

A preliminary visit or meeting such as this is also helpful in that the young person will then recognise at least one Ride High employee on arrival, and because it enables any questions that the young person or their parent/carer may have about Ride High to be answered.

In offering places on the Ride High programme, we seek to extend the provision to as wide a range of individuals and groups as possible by nature of:

- the referrer (to cover as wide a range of referrers as possible);
- the location of the young person's residence within the Borough (within the confines imposed by transport needs);
- the young person's gender;
- the young person's age; and
- the young person's ethnicity.

For the avoidance of doubt, where the parent/carer of a young person is also a referrer, or employed by a referrer, that young person must be referred to Ride High by an independent referrer.

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Risk assessing young people

If deemed appropriate following an initial visit to Ride High (or home or school visit), a risk assessment on a young person will be carried out by Ride High before that young person is accepted on to the Ride High programme.

- The risk assessment will be kept in the young person's file.
- The young person should be advised when, how and why information is to be shared with others.
- The risk assessment should be reviewed and updated as a matter of course if/when an incident occurs or information is received, which impacts upon the risk assessment.
- The risk assessment should otherwise be reviewed termly.
- Any special measures required when working with a young person must be agreed with Ride High and explained to the young person.
- Ride High will make all employees and volunteers, and RHEC, aware of any special measures required when working with a particular young person.
- The addition or deletion of special measures to or from an existing risk assessment in respect of a young person must be agreed with the Children's Manager or Centre Manager.

Waiting list

Ride High has limited places. Should we receive more referrals than we have available places at the time of referral, we operate a waiting list. We will inform the referrer as soon as we know that a place is not immediately available, and that the young person has therefore been added to the waiting list. For young people on the waiting list, places are offered according to the following criteria:

- We will always prioritise referrals based on the level of disadvantage (and in particular the risk of harm) faced by a young person (as evidenced by the referral forms) and therefore the need for the service and the benefits we provide.
- We take into consideration whether there is any other service or help available to the young person.
- We run both daytime and evening sessions with eight young people per session; and we aim to ensure that all the young people attending a session are a similar age and have a similar level of horse related experience, as this enables every young person in that group to feel most comfortable and secure, and to make the most progress. When a space becomes available, we have to consider whether the young person at the top of the waiting list can attend at the time available and in the particular group with the space taking into consideration their age, needs and horse-riding experience. We also look at the compatibility of the group as a whole. We may be able to make changes to other groups to accommodate a new young person but this will only be in extreme circumstances as we try not to break up an established and happy group.

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- We must also consider the availability of funding for a young person. We aim not to let this determine whether or when a young person is accepted onto the Ride High programme but we do have to take our financial position into account when assessing how many unfunded places we can offer.
- Priority will not be given to a young person purely based on the date their referral was received. The date of referral may become relevant where two young people appear to have the same level of priority based on the points above.
- The waiting list will be updated in accordance with these criteria each time a young person's name is added or removed. This means that a young person's position on the waiting list can go up or down.

Ride High maintains regular contact with referrers. Ride High reviews and monitors the waiting list and priority levels on a regular basis. Referrers are informed of progress.

Ride High programme

Through riding/horse care and clubroom activities, Ride High offers all its members a programme that provides them with the opportunity to Make progress in areas of personal need, especially self-esteem, self-discipline, feelings of competence and positive relationships. Progress and wellbeing are monitored through interaction with club-leaders and using a measure developed by Ride High. Members complete this at induction and on conclusion of the course, with additional uses if the course length warrants them.

Members of groups formed from the waiting list also have the opportunity to attain levels of the Ride High Award, which provides a record of some of their achievements and progression. Four levels (Beginner, Trainee, Apprentice and Expert) can be earned by demonstrating increasing levels of social skills (participation, speaking and listening, self-control and teamwork) and horse-related skills.

Some young people progress beyond the Ride High Award during their membership of Ride High, benefitting from the Ride High programme in additional ways by taking part in activities and educational trips.

Alongside the learning programme provided by Ride High, we run one to one sessions which monitor and record member wellbeing. Also at least once a term we review with the waiting-list group members achievements against their personal targets, their progress on the Ride High Award and their participation levels (attendance of sessions and Ride High trips and volunteering opportunities).

Progression or exit from Ride High

Ride High is committed to an approach which considers the individual needs of young people according to their circumstances.

The following principles are the basic criteria for attending and progressing on from Ride High:

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- Young people join either a twelve, twenty four or thirty six week programme. In exceptional circumstances the initial membership length can be extended.
- All decisions with regard to exceptional circumstances will be made by the Children’s Committee, and will be reviewed every three months.
- A young person may be asked to leave Ride High at any time if the circumstances (as described below) justify it. Any such decision will be made by the Children’s Committee in their absolute discretion.

Outcomes beyond exit from Ride High

At the conclusion of a course all participants’ achievements will be celebrated. Families and referrers might be invited to watch them ride. Each young person will be presented with a leaver’s pack, to include some or all of the following: work completed in sessions, certificate(s) of achievement (including the Ride High Award where relevant), photographs of their experience and a rosette. This is an important tangible record of their time on the programme.

All young people are offered a follow up review as part of a group reunion at Ride High to assess how their wellbeing has changed. . Calls are made to parents/carers of a random selection of members from all groups to explore change - the first call is made around the time the course concludes, with further calls three or six months later.

Circumstances justifying exclusion from Ride High.

A young person may be asked to leave Ride High if (s)he ceases to satisfy the Entry Criteria (as decided by the Children’s Committee in their absolute discretion), or if (s)he:

- cannot demonstrate a proper commitment to participating in all parts of the Ride High programme;
- has not followed the terms and conditions of their Member’s Agreement;
- displays behaviour justifying exclusion in accordance with our Behaviour Policy and/or any behaviour considered by others to be dangerous, aggressive, abusive or offensive where there is a lack of respect and consideration for Ride High employees/volunteers and other members (or to anyone else whilst in our care) and where poor behaviour has a detrimental effect on the learning and enjoyment of others;
- presents a risk with regard to health and safety (for example, is pregnant; refuses to acknowledge and follow Ride High’s codes of conduct; is believed (by at least two Ride High employees/volunteers) to have been using drugs or alcohol prior to, during or after Ride High session or Ride High employees/volunteers are made aware of incidents related to drugs or alcohol that the young person has been involved with outside Ride High and such incidents are considered by Ride High employees/volunteers to have a negative impact on the young person or other young people and Ride High employees/volunteers when attending Ride High);
- instigates or is involved in actively promoting acts of gross misconduct (eg. physical or verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards Ride High employees/volunteers or

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other Ride High members, or behaving in a dangerous or inappropriate manner towards horses).

Our Behaviour Policy sets out the procedure for terminating a young person’s membership for behavioural reasons, whereby Cause for Concern Notices are issued prior to a discussion with the young person concerned together with their parents/carers/referrer as appropriate.

Training and awareness

A copy of this Policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers and each must sign the list attached to the original to indicate (s)he has read and understood it. It will also be made available to all referrers and members and/or their parents/carers, and shown to all students undergoing training at Ride High.

Approval and review

This Entrance, Progression and Exit Policy (Long-term members) was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees. It will be reviewed bi-annually, or more frequently if appropriate.