

**Date: 31 May 2019**

**For: Employees, volunteers, students, referrers, members**



## **Entrance, Progression and Exit Policy** **(Long-term 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.

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 “long-term 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 (Fixed term 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;

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 “long-term 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 “long-term member”:

- (s)he has been referred to Ride High by either a child care agency or child care professional;
- (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 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.

In addition, the referrer must have completed our Service Level Agreement. Furthermore, by the end of the second week of the young person's membership, (s)he must have signed the Ride High Member's Agreement, which sets out the conditions of their membership.

It is also essential that a Ride High employee has met the young person before (s)he starts attending. Therefore a home or school visit, or a meeting at Ride High (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;
- 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.

## **Risk assessing young people**

If deemed appropriate by the Children's Manager or Centre Manager following a home or school visit (or an initial meeting at Ride High), 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 day time 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 horseriding 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 and horseriding 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.
- 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 will be relevant only 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 reviews and monitors the waiting list on a regular basis, and will keep referrers informed of progress.

### **Ride High Award**

Through riding/horse care and clubroom activities, Ride High offers all its long-term members a learning programme that provides them with the opportunity to attain the Ride High Award. The Award represents a meaningful record of the young person's achievements and progression. Each long-term member works through progressive levels of the Award, namely Beginner, Trainee, Apprentice and Expert. These levels are earned by demonstrating pre-determined levels of social skills (participation skills, speaking and listening skills, self-control skills and teamwork skills) and horseriding skills.

Ride High aims to add to each long-term member's achievement in attaining the Ride High Award by helping and encouraging them to achieve a further tangible positive outcome of their time at Ride High, be it engaging in voluntary work, work experience, or progressing to further education if appropriate based on the age of the member. Ride High also aims to encourage less tangible positive outcomes for all its members, namely increased self-esteem, self-discipline, feelings of competence and positive relationships.

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

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

### **Progression or exit from Ride High**

Ride High is committed to a long-term 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:

- Young people attend Ride High for an initial twelve week period, to be extended thereafter provided they continue to satisfy the Entry Criteria and continue to benefit from their attendance, and subject also to their commitment to regular and sustained long-term attendance rates and satisfactory performance reviews conducted on a regular basis.
- Unless the exceptional circumstances described below apply, a young person is unlikely to attend Ride High for longer than one year.
- A young person may be allowed to continue to attend Ride High past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if it is considered the (s)he:
  - continues to meet the Entry Criteria; **and**
  - has shown a commitment to regular and sustained attendance over a continued period of time; **and**
  - has demonstrated considerable progress in developing social skills as demonstrated by achievement against their individual targets reviewed at regular intervals throughout their learning programme, and has impressed Ride High employees/volunteers with their effort, performance and positive attitude over a long-term period; **and**
  - (s)he has been a volunteer or an ambassador on a regular basis demonstrating a commitment to Ride High and to other young people within Ride High; **and**
  - it is felt that (s)he would continue to reap considerable rewards from remaining in the programme or that to leave Ride High would have a significant deleterious effect.

All decisions with regard to these 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**

Each young person, during his/her time at Ride High, will have worked towards the Ride High Award. When (s)he leaves Ride High, his/her achievements and progress within the Award will be celebrated; we encourage parents/carers and referrers to attend a leaving session during which a certificate will be presented to the young person.

Ride High will also work to prepare the young person for, and support him/her in, the next stage of their life beyond Ride High, be that:

- continuation of school;
- leaving school and going on to further education or training;
- finding employment;
- finding work experience/volunteering opportunities at RHEC;
- finding external support groups such as youth clubs.

All young people are offered a follow up review by Ride High approximately six months after leaving Ride High to assess how they are progressing. Should further help be needed, we aim to continue to liaise with and to support the young person in question.

The Children's Committee will be involved in monitoring the destination of all young people leaving Ride High.

### **Exceptional circumstances justifying extension of time at Ride High**

A young person may be allowed to continue to attend Ride High for longer than one year if it is considered that (s)he:

- continues to meet the Entry Criteria; **and**
- has shown a commitment to regular and sustained attendance over a continued period of time; **and**
- has demonstrated considerable progress in developing social skills as demonstrated by achievement against their individual targets reviewed at regular intervals throughout their learning programme, and has impressed Ride High employees/volunteers with their effort, performance and positive attitude over a long-term period; **and**
- (s)he has been a volunteer or an ambassador on a regular basis demonstrating a commitment to Ride High and to other young people within Ride High; **and**
- it is felt that (s)he would continue to reap considerable rewards from remaining in the programme or that to leave Ride High would have a significant deleterious effect.

All decisions with regard to these exceptional circumstances will be made by the Children's Committee, and will be reviewed every three months.

### **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 ceases to qualify for riding under RHEC's rules, 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 their 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 their 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);
- fails to participate in programme activities according to their personal targets as defined by Ride High employees/volunteers working in collaboration with the young person;
- 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 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.

### **Associate membership**

In certain circumstances, a member may be permitted to convert his or her full membership of Ride High to associate membership. An associate member is a long-term member who, for whatever reason (health or otherwise), is no longer able to fulfil his or her commitment to regular and sustained long-term attendance rates, but who would benefit from remaining a member of Ride High and who it is hoped would be able to return to full membership in due course.

The following principles apply to associate membership:

- There is only a very limited number of associate memberships available.
- Should the Children's Manager consider that a member is suitable for associate membership, he or she will discuss this with the member's referrer and/or parent/carer, after consultation with the Children's Committee.
- An associate membership is offered for a period of three months; it is hoped that within that time the young person would be able to return to full membership, but an associate membership can be renewed for additional three month periods if considered appropriate.
- During a period of associate membership, Ride High will keep in contact with the young person and discuss with them or their referrer and/or parent/carer when and if it would be appropriate to revert to full membership.
- There is no expectation that an associate member will attend any Ride High sessions but is welcome to do so if/when he or she feels fit and able. An associate member's place in a group may be filled by another young person. It is likely that the associate member will return to the same group when able to do so. In the event that a group therefore has too many members for a riding lesson, the Children's Manager, after consultation with the Children's Committee, will determine how best to run the group in the best interests of all its members.
- If during a period of associate membership, the young person turns 18, the continuation of his or her membership of Ride High will be made by the children's committee in their absolute discretion.
- If an associate member is funded, no fees already paid to Ride High will be reimbursed on conversion to associate membership, but no new fees will be charged until the period of associate membership ends. Therefore, if and when a funded young person returns to full membership, fees will again be charged from that point.

### **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 each year thereafter, or more frequently if appropriate.

Signed.....

Date.....