



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2023

This Old Horse is happy to have you on board and is grateful for your willingness to share your talents and expertise! It is our goal to create a fun, fulfilling environment where you are part of a team, feel your time and talents are valued, and have the ability to grow your expertise.

This handbook is intended for general reference and may not outline every situation that may arise. Should a situation arise that is not outlined in this handbook, Management should be contacted within a timely manner. This Old Horse trusts its Employees to use their best judgment to address issues as they arise should there not be a policy in place regarding that specific situation.

As our organization grows, the need may arise to revise our policies. This Old Horse therefore reserves the right to change, alter, amend, make exceptions to, or discontinue any policy or procedure set forth herein. Should such changes take place, they will be publicized through written communication from the Executive Director.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Founded in 2012, This Old Horse, Inc. is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to provide sanctuary to retired, rescued, and recovering horses while they serve as ambassadors to the positive effect of "horsepower" in the lives of people. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is privately funded through donations and fee-for-service programs (boarding, lessons, leasing, etc.).

### **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this handbook, the following terms are defined as such:

**Management:** The management team made up of the Executive Director, President, and Vice President.

### **CONDUCT**

This Old Horse prides itself on being an inclusive, welcoming organization in a safe, clean environment. **Employees and Instructors are acting as brand representatives of This Old Horse and are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, appropriate manner at all times, including but not limited to communications (in-person, via phone and online), behavior and attire. The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for gossiping, ranting and other negative talk at the workplace.** Should Employees have a concern, it should immediately be brought to the attention of Management. All Employees and Instructors are required to abide by stable rules (*see Appendix A*).

Every Employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies. They also have the responsibility to perform their duties to the best of their ability and to the standards set forth in their job description or as otherwise established. If an Employee is struggling to perform their job duties, they should contact their supervisor.

**Employees are expected to practice discretion when interacting with volunteers, donors, and other guests—individuals who are not staffers and therefore are not privy to confidential organizational information. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the Management.**

## **VOLUNTEERS**

This Old Horse has a large volunteer base that allows the organization to function to its full extent. The ability and talents of these volunteers can vary greatly. It should always be kept in mind that these volunteers are generously giving their time and sharing their talents, and they should be valued, respected, and thanked.

While volunteers are an integral part of our organization, they are not staff members and therefore are not privy to confidential organization information. **For this reason, Employees must use discretion in their interactions and discussions with volunteers.**

Should an Employee have a concern regarding volunteer conduct, it should be brought to the attention of Management.

## **INCIDENT REPORTING**

Safety is the top priority at This Old Horse. To this end, we maintain records of any “incidents.” Emergency phone numbers are listed in the lobby.

Should a human become injured, the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) **In the event of a serious injury**, call 9--1--1. A serious injury is defined as a person losing consciousness, bleeding severely or not breathing.
- 2) **In the event of a less serious injury**, provide medical treatment/advice only to your ability level.
- 3) For all human injuries, Employees/Instructors must provide the following information to the Executive Director **within 24 hours**:
  - a. Who
  - b. What
  - c. When
  - d. Where
  - e. How

In the event of an Employee injury, Employee will assist with any required paperwork and related materials within the timeframe deemed necessary by the Executive Director.

Should a horse become injured, the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) **In the event of a serious injury**, call Management. If you cannot reach Management, call Cleary Lake Vets. A serious injury in a horse is defined as choking, colic symptoms, severe bleeding, or other obviously serious injury. Use your good judgment.
- 2) **In the event of a less serious injury**, call Management. Provide treatment only to your ability level.

- 3) For all horse injuries, Employees/Instructors must provide the following information to the Executive Director **within 24 hours**:
- a. Who
  - b. What
  - c. When
  - d. Where
  - e. How

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

It is understood that Employees' involvement with the organization, including that of Management, is part-time. That said, Employees are expected to check their email, voicemail messages, etc., on a regular basis and respond to constituent and organization communications within a timely manner (**within 24 hours or on the next business day**).

### **COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT**

Stable Hands are compensated for time spent completing work duties as outlined in their job description or otherwise set forth.

Instructors are compensated for time spent on-site preparing, conducting, and cleaning up after lessons as well as addressing any emergency situations that may arise while they are on the premises. Time spent lesson planning, soliciting clients, touring the facilities with current/potential clients, riding horses, etc. is not paid unless otherwise specified.

This Old Horse does not provide benefits to its Employees unless otherwise specified.

Employees are encouraged to contact Management should they be interested in further opportunities with the organization. Such opportunities are not guaranteed and should not be expected.

### **Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) Accrual and Use**

As of 1/1/2024 and In compliance with Minnesota legislation, employees who perform services for at least 80 hours per year, will earn up to 48 hours of ESST per year. The paid time off accrues at a rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 48 hours in a year.

AXIS existing leave and paid time off (PTO) policies fully meet Minnesota's earned sick and safe time requirements.

ESST may be used for missed work during regularly scheduled hours. ESST may only be used for eligible uses.

### **Eligible Use of ESST**

An employee may use accrued ESST for:

1. An employee's:
  - o Mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition;

- o Need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition; or
  - o Need for preventive medical or health care.
- 2. The care of a family member:
  - o Suffering from with a mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition;
  - o Needing a medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition; or
  - o Needing preventive medical or health care.
- 3. An absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking of the employee or employee's family member, provided the absence is to:
  - o Seek medical attention related to physical or psychological injury or disability caused by domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking;
  - o Obtain services from a victim service organization;
  - o Obtain psychological or other counseling;
  - o Seek relocation or take steps to secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking; or
  - o Seek legal advice or take legal action, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or resulting from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.
- 4. Closure of the employee's place of business due to weather or other public emergency or an employee's need to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or another public emergency.
- 5. The employee's inability to work or telework because the employee is: (i) Prohibited from working by the employer due to health concerns related to the potential transmission of a communicable illness related to a public emergency; or (ii) Seeking or awaiting the results of a diagnostic test for, or a medical diagnosis of, a communicable disease related to a public emergency and such employee has been exposed to a communicable disease or the employee's employer has requested a test or diagnosis; and
- 6. When it has been determined by the health authorities having jurisdiction or by a health care professional that the presence of the employee or family member of the employee in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the exposure of the employee or family member of the employee to a communicable disease, whether the employee or family member has contracted the communicable disease.

## **Definition of Family Member**

“Family member” refers to:

1. An employee’s:
  - o Child, foster child, adult child, legal ward, child for whom the employee is legal guardian, or child to whom the employee stands or stood in loco parentis;
  - o Spouse or registered domestic partner;
  - o Sibling, stepsibling, or foster sibling;
  - o Biological, adoptive, or foster parent, stepparent, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child;
  - o Grandchild, foster grandchild, or step grandchild;
  - o Grandparent or step grandparent;
  - o A child of a sibling of the employee;
  - o A sibling of the parents of the employee; or
  - o A child-in-law or sibling-in-law.
2. Any family members listed in clause (1) of a spouse or registered domestic partner.
3. Any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.
4. Up to one individual annually designated by the employee.

## **Carryover**

An employee may carry over accrued but unused ESST to the following year. At no time can the employee have more than 80 hours of unused ESST. Unused ESST is not paid out. Employees rehired within 180 days of termination will have their ending ESST balance reinstated.

## **Notice of Intent to Use ESST**

If the need for use is foreseeable, advance notice of the intention to use ESST is required as soon as practicable.

## **PAY PERIODS/TIMESHEETS**

Pay periods are every two weeks, beginning on a Monday and ending on a Sunday (to determine beginning/end of current pay period, check with the Executive Director). Paychecks will be directly deposited the Friday following the end of each pay period.

Employee timesheets must be submitted by 9 p.m. on the last day of the pay period (or as otherwise specified by the Executive Director in special circumstances) for Employees to receive their paycheck on time. Should an Employee not submit their time record by this deadline, This Old Horse will issue a paycheck on the next scheduled payday.

## **SCHEDULE/WORKLOAD**

It is each Employee's responsibility to manage their own schedule and ensure their workload is appropriate/manageable. Should their schedule change and/or workload become unmanageable, Employee must notify their supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor and Employee will work together to determine the best way to address the issue.

## **CALENDARS**

The Arena Schedule and Staff Schedules are maintained online via Google Calendar and will be made accessible to all Employees. The Arena Schedule is linked to a calendar on the This Old Horse website to notify boarders and volunteers of available arena time. It is each Instructor's responsibility to add/update their lessons on the online Arena Schedule. Should an Instructor cancel a lesson, it is their responsibility to remove it from the online Arena Schedule so that the website calendar is accurate. **The online calendar is the primary arena scheduling calendar and supersedes any other existing calendars.**

The Staff Schedule is for any other activities that do not require *exclusive* arena use. It is also for happenings such as vacations, appointments, meetings, etc.

## **GUESTS**

We welcome guests to Wishbone Ranch and encourage Employees to invite their friends and family out to the farm! All guests must be accompanied by an Employee and sign a Liability Release (located in the lobby), and any children must be always supervised. Guests are not allowed to ride/otherwise work with the horses or enter horse areas (including but not limited to arenas, paddocks, catch pens and stalls) without prior approval. We encourage guests who are interested in further interacting with the horses to become volunteers.

## **ALLEGATIONS OF ANIMAL MISTREATMENT**

This Old Horse prides itself on providing the highest level of care for the horses and other animals in its keep. The organization has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of any animal or person and takes very seriously any allegations of animal mistreatment by any individual. Should such a concern arise, it should immediately be brought to the attention of Management.

## **ALLEGATIONS OF DANGEROUS/INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

This Old Horse prides itself on creating a welcoming, safe environment. Should an Employee witness dangerous/inappropriate conduct by any individual, it should immediately be brought to the attention of Management.

## **SUGGESTIONS/FEEDBACK**

This Old Horse welcomes feedback and constructive criticism that can improve the organization and its offerings. All such suggestions should be directed to the Executive Director.



### **ABSENTEEISM/TIME OFF**

This Old Horse encourages Employees to take time off as needed. We request as much notice as possible (ideally two weeks) for scheduled time off to ensure all job responsibilities are covered during an Employee absence. Stable Hands are responsible for recruiting their own substitutes from among their coworkers for any time off.

Should there be an emergency that requires time off, we understand that two weeks' notice may not be feasible. In such situations, we appreciate as much notice as is reasonably possible.

### **LIABILITY INSURANCE**

All Employees, Instructors, clients, and volunteers are covered under This Old Horse's liability insurance.

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

This Old Horse provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all Employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees are prohibited from knowingly or willingly disclosing confidential information regarding fellow employees, clients, volunteers, or donors to anyone other than This Old Horse personnel. Employees are cautioned to exercise care not to disclose confidential information unintentionally through indiscreet conversations or careless handling of sensitive documents. For the purpose of this policy, "confidential information" means any information contained in a personnel, client, volunteer, or donor record as well as internal written and oral communications. Employees who violate this policy, either purposely or through failure to exercise reasonable care, are subject to disciplinary action.

### **HARASSMENT**

This Old Horse regards harassment in the workplace as unacceptable. It is our policy to maintain a welcoming, inclusive environment free from discrimination or offensive behavior, including but not limited to inappropriate remarks or conduct related to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status.

Sexual harassment can be defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submitting to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
- submitting to or rejecting the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting an individual

- such conduct has the purpose or result of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment at any level will result in severe disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any individual who feels they have been subjected to offensive or discriminatory behavior should object to the behavior and inform the offender that such behavior is unwelcome. Further, any individual experiencing harassment should contact Management. All concerns will be taken seriously and will be responded to as quickly as possible. Conduct determined to be in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

This Old Horse supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. Our progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and/or performance issues.

This Old Horse's progressive discipline process is as follows:

- **Verbal warning:** A supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, and a written record of the discussion is placed in the employee/Instructor's file for future reference.
- **Written warning:** Written warnings are used for behavior or violations that a supervisor considers serious or in situations when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior. Written warnings are placed in an employee/Instructor's personnel file. Employees should recognize the grave nature of the written warning.
- **Performance improvement plan:** When an Employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that has not been readily resolved or when they has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently, they may be given a final warning or placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP). PIP status will last for a predetermined amount of time not to exceed 90 days. Within this time period, Employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain the conduct and/or work requirements as specified by This Old Horse. At the end of the performance improvement period, the performance improvement plan may be closed or, if established goals are not met, dismissal may occur.

### **SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Separation of employment within an organization can occur for several different reasons:

- **Resignation:** Although we hope your employment with us will be a mutually rewarding experience, we understand that varying circumstances cause Employees

to voluntarily resign employment. Resigning Employees are requested to provide two weeks' written notice to facilitate a smooth transition.

- **Termination:** Employees of This Old Horse are employed on an at-will basis, and the company retains the right to terminate an Employee at any time.

## **APPENDIX A: STABLE RULES**

These rules are designed for the safety of boarders, horses, and guests. In addition to the rules on this list, Stable expects boarders and guests to be respectful of people, property, and animals.

### **General Rules:**

- No drug or alcohol use.
- No smoking on premises.
- Stable visitors must sign a liability release form (provided by Stable).
- Park only in designated parking area, avoid honking your horn, setting off your car alarm, driving fast or otherwise allowing your vehicle to make noises likely to spook horses.
- Balloons, fireworks and other potentially noise-making items are prohibited.
- Boarders and their guests must always wear closed-toe footwear on Stable premises, even if not riding or handling a horse. Bare feet, sandals or other footwear that leave feet exposed can be dangerous.
- Stable premises hours are from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. If a boarder needs to be on Stable premises outside of those hours, Stable management can approve it.
- Boarders and their guests must conduct themselves with dignity and good sportsmanship.
- Stable has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse of any animal or person.
- Boarders and their guests may not enter private areas within the barn or any pastures or paddocks (except to retrieve their own horse) without prior permission from Stable management.
- Boarders and their guests should leave gates in the condition they found them. Closed gates must remain closed and latched.
- The last person to leave the facility should turn off the lights and secure the doors.

### **Children**

- A responsible adult must always accompany children unless the child's parents receive prior permission from Stable management. Small children must be always in hand. Under no circumstances may boarders or their guests allow children to yell, run or otherwise spook horses or annoy other clients. No baby strollers, bicycles, motorized vehicles, or toys likely to spook horses are permitted on Stable premises without prior permission from Stable management. Children are not allowed in the pastures or paddocks.

### **Dogs**

- Dogs are permitted on Stable premises so long as they are always under their owner's control. No dogs are permitted in the arenas, paddocks, or pastures and under no circumstances may dogs be permitted to chase other animals on Stable premises. Stable may, in its discretion, refuse to permit a particular dog to return to the Stable property.

## **Barn Safety and Etiquette**

- Boarders and their guests must always keep their horses under control.
- Boarders and their guests must pick up and put away tack, manure forks and all other equipment in designated areas after use.
- Boarders and their guests are responsible for storing and securing their own equipment. To prevent theft, consider taking valuable equipment home when not in use.
- Boarders and their guests may not borrow or handle other boarders' tack, equipment, or horses without prior permission. This includes feeding other horses treats.
- When finished grooming or washing a horse, boarders and their guests must remove all manure, hoof pickings and loose hair and dispose of them in designated areas.
- Horses may be tied only in designated areas. All horses must be tied with a quick-release method or panic snap.
- Boarders and their guests may not help themselves to hay, feed, bedding, or other Stable property without prior permission from Stable management.
- If a horse is tied in a place that blocks passage of other horses or people, please move the horse promptly so that they can pass safely.
- Feed, treats or anything else edible kept on Stable premises must be stored in a rodent-proof and insect-proof container.
- Each horse must have a properly fitted halter and lead rope accessible in plain view in the designated area.
- If boarder or their guests notice damage to a stall, paddock, fence, or pasture, they should inform the Stable management immediately.
- No radios, CD players, etc. are permitted on Stable premises without prior permission from Stable management.
- Boarders and their guests must keep the tack room, barn aisles, restrooms, and all other common areas clean and neat.

## **Riding Safety and Arena Etiquette**

- Stable requires all riders to wear a properly fitted, ASTM/ SEI approved equestrian helmet with the chinstrap securely fastened when mounted.
- Boarders and their guests should always wear proper barn attire including closed-toe footwear with a heel.
- No one may jump on Stable premises without prior permission from Stable management.
- All riders and handlers must use tack that allows them to control their horses.
- Longeing is permitted in the riding areas only when others are not riding.
- Riding is permitted in designated arenas only. No riding in the lawn or parking area is permitted. Trail riding/riding in the pastures is prohibited unless Management has given prior authorization and/or accompanies volunteer, boarder, or client.
- Each rider and handler must treat other riders and handlers with consideration and respect. Riders going in opposite directions must pass left shoulder to left shoulder and riders going in the same direction must pass only on the inside. Each rider and

handler must leave at least one horse length clear distance between his or her horse and each other horse. If a horse is green or frisky, its rider or handler should wait until the arena is clear and warn other riders or handlers to treat the horse with extra caution. If a rider or handler is unclear about arena etiquette, they should yield to other riders and handlers and call out their direction politely (e.g., "Passing on the inside.") More experienced riders and handlers should help less experienced riders and handlers by yielding the right of way and politely pointing out any unsafe arena use.

- Boarders and their guests may not use other boarders' arena equipment without prior permission.
- Boarders and their guests using arena equipment such as ground poles, barrels or cones must remove the equipment and store it in the designated area after using it. If there are horses already using the arena, please ask the riders or handlers before setting up your equipment as some horses may be spooked by rolling barrels and other equipment setup.
- Riders have priority over turnouts for arena use. If a horse is turned out in the arena when someone else wants to ride, the horse's handler must remove the horse from the arena as soon as possible. Riders waiting to ride in the arena must politely ask those with turned out horses to remove them from the arena.
- If any rider falls, all other riders must immediately halt their horses and dismount, then call 911 and Stable management for assistance.
- If any horse gets loose, whether inside or outside the arena, all riders must halt and dismount until the loose horse is caught.
- No sitting on fences or gates.
- Information about people and their horses will be held in confidence, please respect the privacy and confidence of other horse owners, as well.

### **Accidents and Injuries**

- If any person witnesses an accident or injury of any kind to a rider, handler guest or animal, they must report it immediately to Stable management so that proper care and follow up can be administered. All persons on Stable premises must follow posted emergency procedures.

## **STABLE HAND ADDENDUM**

### **INCIDENT REPORTING**

Stable Hands are required to report to Management any time something goes awry during a feed shift. Such instances include a horse or human injury, a horse not eating, a horse getting loose, a facilities issue, or something of the like. In the event of such a situation, Stable Hands are required to provide the following information to the Executive Director **within 24 hours:**

- a. Who
- b. What
- c. When
- d. Where
- e. How

This allows Management to assess and address the situation effectively in a timely manner.

## **INSTRUCTOR ADDENDUM**

### **LESSON POLICIES**

All lesson clients must complete the online Lesson Registration and a Liability Release (located in the lobby). The Instructor will act as the client's main contact.

Lessons are typically one hour long and begin and end precisely on time. The client can expect a relaxed, comfortable environment and the full, undivided attention of the Instructor. Should the client/Instructor determine a shorter or longer lesson is appropriate, such arrangements can be made and will result in a different lesson price.

Lessons are focused on the relationship between the horse and client as well as the technical aspects of riding. It is essential for the client to build a solid foundation and understanding of horse behavior as well as the essentials of horse health and horse keeping as part of the overall experience. Activities to promote this can include grooming, tacking, groundwork, etc.

Instructors will arrive with ample time to prep for their lesson(s). The horse will be groomed/tacked by the Client at whatever level they are capable of with the assistance/supervision of the Instructor. Clients are allowed to bridle only after they have been properly taught this skill and/or their ability to do so has been shown to be acceptable. Because the horses are exposed to many different people with varying skill levels, we do not want to risk that they will develop undesirable behaviors or discomfort around the biting process.

Without exception, all clients must wear helmets when mounted and must use a mounting block to mount. Clients must wear long pants and riding boots or shoes with smooth soles.

In certain circumstances, such as back-to-back group lessons, This Old Horse will provide a lesson assistant, a highly experienced volunteer who can help with horses and/or clients both before and after the lesson. Lesson assistants are not teaching assistants.

Clients are not allowed in paddocks, catch pens and other such horse areas without the approval and/or supervision of the Instructor or other authorized personnel.

### **LESSON PRICING/PAYMENT**

For current lesson pricing and packages, see the This Old Horse website. Employees are not authorized to give lessons at a discounted rate without prior authorization by the Executive Director. If for any reason a lesson fee is discounted or waived, Instructor will be paid the standard rate for that lesson.

Instructors are responsible for ensuring payment for lessons, whether via credit card (on the This Old Horse website), check, cash, or redemption of accrued volunteer hours.



## **CANCELLATION OF LESSONS**

It is our goal to provide our clients with consist, reliable services and, in the event a lesson must be cancelled, as much notice as possible. If for some reason the client or Instructor cannot make the lesson, Instructor should follow this procedure:

- 1) Attempt to reschedule lesson with usual Instructor
- 2) Determine if another Instructor is willing/able to take on client for that lesson/week and if so, when
- 3) If client is comfortable taking makeup lesson with another Instructor, schedule client for makeup lesson with alternate Instructor

Lessons do not take place when the temperature is below 15°F. Should weather create a dangerous travel situation, it is the Instructor's responsibility to cancel and reschedule their lesson(s). Should another situation arise, that would contraindicate lessons, Management will notify the Instructor.