

Cowboy Kindergarten syllabus outline

Welcome to Cowboy Kindergarten! Cowboy Kindergarten is a comprehensive equestrian program for children ages 4-9. Because our program utilizes our miniature horses exclusively, there is a riding weight limit of 70 lbs. Children over 70 lbs are still invited to enroll, but activities will be limited to ground work, and showmanship. Classes take place over summer break, and can continue throughout the year in our enclosed arena. Instruction will be in the form of private lessons of 1 hour duration. Children will start each lesson grooming and caring for his/her pony, and discussing homework. It is important to instill trust, respect and relationship between the child and his or her pony. There are endless hours of giggles, smiles, and rewarding activities, but the benefits are earned through hard work and study. Please know that this is **not** an hour long pony ride. If you feel your child is not ready to put in the work and enjoy the results he or she puts in, then this may not be the correct fit. **(Please see our Philosophy statement.)**

Attendance: Efforts will be made to locate a local schooling show each year. Since location of these shows vary significantly from year to year, this may or may not be possible. If however, one is available to our location, students and families are encouraged to attend. It is recommended that children attend 1 class per week if they wish to attend our end of season schooling show. The schooling show is merely a fun way for children to show off what they have learned all summer and have fun with their families. It is in no way mandatory for children to participate if they do not wish to do so. The only limitation for attending the event will be that of safety. It will be necessary for your child to be consistent in his or her classes in order to achieve the degree of respect and control of his or her pony. That being said, whether or not your child has the level of control necessary to safely participate will be evaluated and left up to the instructor's judgment. . Entry fees and transportation to event will also be the responsibility of the student's family. Transportation of horses and equipment will be provided by instructor.

Assignments: Classes will begin and end with the collection and allocation of a fun (age appropriate) "homework" assignment. Assignments are simple and usually consist of a coloring page that stresses a point made during class that week. Stickers will be awarded to students remembering to bring back their assignment folders.

Safety: For safety reasons it is important that your child is comfortable with the proper care and handling of his or her lesson pony. Progression from handling the pony to progression into the saddle is assessed on a case by case basis. It is therefore important that it is understood that your child may spend a great deal of time in ground instruction before actually "riding" his/her lesson pony. Activities will include, leading, grooming, stable care, haltering, tying, and basic tacking up. Assignment of ponies to students will be determined by the instructor.

Spectators: We ask that Students be accompanied by an adult for classes. Please limit additional family members to a minimum as it can be very distracting. Unruly children will be asked to leave the lesson. Spectators are asked not to wonder freely around the property. Please do not bring personal pets.

****Important**** Due to Covid-19restrictions we are limiting all spectators at this time. Parents will be assisting Child during all close contact aspects of the class. Due to the need for parental

interaction we ask that additional siblings and spectators not accompany parent/student to class until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience this may bring.

Attire : Long pants, and comfortable shirt, and enclosed boots with a heel. Your child will need an approved properly fitting equestrian helmet before beginning under saddle. They can be obtained at any farm/feed store. An appropriate show outfit will be required at the expense of student's family for attendance of schooling show. This will consist of a nice pair of blue or black jeans, a long sleeve button down shirt with collar, a belt, a clean pair of boots, and a cowboy hat. This does not need to be anything fancy, but should reflect a level of pride for our students.

Field Trips: If at all possible, we may arrange a "field trip" for our students to attend (spectate) a local mini horse and/or mountain trail show. It is a great way to see how things work, and get the children excited and interested in the sport of horsemanship and prepare for their own event. We will mutually arrange to meet at the field trip location. Participation is completely voluntary.

Payment : Payment is due on the first assigned lesson day of that month for the entire month. Because time slots are reserved for private lessons, student Absences / cancellations are not refunded or replaced. If for unforeseen circumstance a lesson is canceled on behalf of instructor, funds will absolutely be refunded for the missed lesson. As of 2018, cost is \$30.00 per lesson. Tuition varies upon number of weeks in any given month.

Our philosophy

Make the right choice easy and the wrong choice difficult

(This is applied to ponies and students alike)

Cowboy Kindergarten is designed to help a child grow mentally and emotionally as well as physically.

Your child will learn simple tasks including counting, left and right, equestrian vocabulary, tacking up, safety, enhancement of large motor skills through riding, as well as enhancement of fine motor skills such as buckling, saddling, and knot tying.

The program is also designed to help your child prepare for the social expectations that come with growing. These skills include time management, building relationship(s), nurturing, patience, kindness, responsibility, consequences and perhaps most importantly **respect**.

Children will be expected to listen to instructions and carry them out to the best of their ability.

Making the right choice easy: We make learning fun through games, praise, singing, cheering and clapping when a child is open to instruction and growth.

Making the wrong choice difficult: Resistance and avoidance of instruction through manipulation, deflection, outright refusal, or emotional outbursts of any kind will not be tolerated. Deliberate refusal of instruction at any time will conclude the session. Most children will not like the session ending abruptly. This will give your child time to reflect and correct their choice of action at the next session. Consequences can be painful. Please use this opportunity to prepare your child for the future.

Simply put.... For the safety of your child and the horses, it is imperative that your child is able to listen to direction without resistance. This will be demonstrated on the ground before proceeding to the saddle at each lesson.