**Horse Riding Curriculum:**

**HORSE RIDING SKILL LEVEL**

Depending on the age and skill level of each rider they will be placed in the appropriate riding level. We always advance the student at the rate that suits each individual student to ensure safety and fun for the rider. As students progress they will also learn about healthcare, nutrition and management of horse's care needs.

**Young Riders- (Under 10 Years old)**

For the young riders lead line and lunge line with the instructor will build confidence while the instructor maintains control of the horse to insure safety. The rider will learn to approach the horse safely, both from in front and behind. The student will assist with grooming and leading the horse safely with assistance of the instructor. The rider will learn to hold the reins correctly. Learn proper leg and body position. Gain balance through use of exercises at the walk. Trot during double instruction with instructor. Learn to perform a circle at the walk and steer through cones. Steer over ground poles. Learn to stop and back the horse. Walk trot only.

**"Step-up Program" (10 yrs & under only)**

This is a transition class offered to only riders that are ready to learn the canter but not quiet ready to join the regular group lessons. Class size is 1-2 riders and 30 minutes long just like the young rider lessons. This program is offered for a maximum of 3 lesson packages to allow the next group of riders space to also move up. Class availability is only Tuesdays & Thursdays at 3:30 and space is limited. Young riders might have to join a waiting list.

**Beginner Riding Level (All Ages)**

All beginners are started in a english saddle to learn the basics. That is because english saddles are bigger, more stable and more forgiving for a student that hasn’t developed a seat yet. First time riders will start on a lunge line until independent steering and control are demonstrated by student. Riders will gain their balance and confidence while on the lunge line allowing the instructor to maintain control of the horse. Once the rider is confident the student will be taken off the lunge line and begins independent riding. Steering exercises with colored cones and around poles will make learning fun. After learning circles, serpentines, and obstacles at the walk then students will advance to the trot. When being introduced to the trot student will return to the lunge line. Learning the sitting trot with and without stirrups. When control, speed and direction are demonstrated on the lunge line at the trot then the student will be allowed to advance to trotting independently. Steering, balance and control will now be practiced off the lunge line. The use of cones, ground poles, figure eights, and serpentines will be used.

**Advanced Beginner Riding Level (All Ages)**

By the advanced beginner stage in riding students can now switch to English, if desired. The advanced beginner stage of riding will cover many things. The rider has developed balance and a good seat in western so they will progress with confidence in English. English riders will learn the posting trot, sitting trot and two-point/jumping position. English riders will also learn about “diagonals” at the trot. Both western and english riders will learn speed control at the walk, collected trot and extended trot. While working on speed control of their horses they will learn guiding exercises such as serpentines, figure eights, and circles. When full control and a good seat are demonstrated at all stages of the trot from collected to extended trot, then the rider is ready to learn the canter. Students will learn about “leads” at the canter. Ground poles will be used for trot work. Students will begin to understand how to be an effective rider and not just a passenger on their horse. Learning to bend and supple their horse in the bridle while framing their horses up. Students that wish to compete will now be able to do so in flat walk/trot classes.

**Intermediate Riding Level (All Ages)**

Students that advance to the intermediate level will demonstrate full control of their horse at the walk, trot, and canter. They will understand and demonstrate correct diagonals and leads. Work on trotting circles, serpentines, figure eights, with correct change of bend and diagonals. The canter will now be performed while riding in a group. The rider will practice trotting and cantering without stirrups to improve their leg and balance. The rider will learn how to perform a simple lead change. Maintain the half seat canter and two point trot without trouble. At this point students will be able to show in the walk, trot, canter division at shows.

**Advanced Level Riding Level (All Ages)**

By this stage students will be required to either own or lease their own horse and be in a training/lesson package. Riders are ready to jump full courses with lead changes. We will work on fine tuning their riding skills. Work on inside outside bend, counter canter, leg yields, and many other training exercises. We will focus on their ability to be an effective rider as they work their horse. We will also focus on the rider’s equitation both on the flat and over fences. The rider will set goals to accomplish with their horse. If the rider wishes to compete they will be able to show both flat and jumping classes. Minimum of 3 lessons per week required.

**Sample Horse riding Lesson plan**

The lesson program will be based upon the skill level of the riders. Below are samples of skill levels and appropriate lesson contents, and the schedule for a typical lesson day:

* **Introductory Beginner**   
  Never ridden before - rudimentary skill in two-point trot, posting trot and sitting trot   
  Length of Session:10 weeks
* **Beginner I**   
  Balance work over poles at and trot with and without reins and/or stirrups   
  Introduction to Diagonals walk  
  Introduction to canter in two-point position Length of Session: 10 weeks
* **Beginner II**   
  Canter work - sitting and two-point   
  Introduction to jumping through 2'   
  Refinement of existing skills Length of Session: Ongoing (Due to the refinement of skill this level   
  demands, riders may spend as long as two years here.)
* **Beginner III**   
  Introduction to Dressage at Introductory and Training Levels   
  Introduction to Cross-Country Riding   
  Eventing at Novice Level Length of Session: Ongoing (Due to the refinement of skill this level   
  demands, riders may spend as long as two years here.)
* **Intermediate I**   
  Dressage - Training Level and First Level   
  Eventing - Novice and Training Levels Length of Session:Ongoing

**Daily schedule (Typical Lesson Day: Weekday)**

8:00 a.m. Children

Number of Riders: 3 - 6 each

9:15 a.m. Adult Groups

Number of Riders: 3-6 each

3:00 p.m. After School Groups

Number of Riders: 3-6 each

4:15 p.m. After School Groups

Number of Riders: 3-6 each

6:00 p.m. Evening Groups (Children or Adults)

Number of Riders: 3-6 each

The weekend lesson schedule would be similar to week day

**Riding Skills List**

The below list gives every possible skill that we could teach, in increasing order of difficulty. This way we could look on spectrum, see where our student was, and plan where to go from there.

Note: Order of skill progression will vary per student.This totally depends on the student’s abilities and goals. So take this list as a rough outline that can be rearranged and edited as desired.

**Riding Skills**

Note: Not all the following are Skills. Skills are aids used to communicate with the horse (such as direct rein steering). Some of these are figures (such as the reverse) which are used to practice skills. The list is meant to give you idea on what is being taught

**THE BASICS (order of easiest to hardest will vary per rider)**

* Mounting and Dismounting
* Posture & Balance
* Walk On
* Turn – Direct Rein or Neck Rein
* Circle on rail
* Reverse
* Working Walk
* Back up
* Bending
* Arena Spacing, what to do if you’re too close to someone – pass, circle, cut across
* Sitting Trot
* Develop a secure seat
* walk > trot transition
* trot > walk transition
* Two Point or Half Seat
* why: to develop balance, leg strength, leg control, and prep for posting
* 2 point walk
* 2 point trot
* 2 point trot while counting the beat to prepare for posting
* Two Point Steering
* 2 point steering through small circles on wall
* 2 point steering through figure 8s
* 2 point steering around barrels and cones
* Posting Trot
* correct diagonals
* changing diagonals
* change of rein across the diagonal at a posting trot
* changing diagonals doing figure 8’s
* how to slow down
* how to speed up (& how to pass another rider)
* how to keep an even pace
* all the above at the walk, trot, canter
* Canter
* how to be on the correct lead
* canter circles
* Gait Extensions
* the extended walk
* the extended trot
* the extended canter
* Smooth Precise Transitions
* walk, trot, walk
* trot, canter, trot
* walk, canter, walk
* halt to canter
* precise transitions exactly at the letter
* REFINEMENT OF THE RIDER (working toward more perfect posture, more accurate control, clearer and more invisible aids)
* The Natural Aids
* rein aids
* leading rein
* direct rein
* indirect rein
* pulley rein
* reining
* leg aids
* seat aids
* voice aids
* coordination of all the aids
* demonstrate precise, clear and invisible aids
* Using Artificial Aids
* spurs
* crop
* whip
* Contact
* at walk
* at trot
* at canter
* Improve their Seat
* joints as shock absorbers
* at sitting trot
* at canter
* Canter Lead Identification without looking
* Precise Schooling Figures
* circle
* serpentine
* figure 8
* diagonal
* Controlled Speed

**ENGLISH RIDING ADVANCED SKILLS**

* Lengthening and Shortening
* Longitudinal Flexion
* Lateral Flexion and Bending
* Half Halts
* Simple Lead Change
* Flying Lead Change
* Leg Yield – at walk, trot, canter
* Show Rules
* how to reverse – teardrop shape
* what to do if you’re too close to someone – pass, circle, cut across
* line up and backing
* Jumping Position
* 2 point
* post without stirrups
* 2 point no stirrups
* jog over crossrails without stirrups
* eye control exercises
* The Release
* Cavalettis and Practice Poles
* First Jump, Crossrail
* Lines of Fences
* Cantering Fences
* Turns to Fences
* Jump a Small Course
* Dealing with Problems, Refusals, Runouts

**Canadian Equestrian Levels and guideliens**

**Learn to Ride Levels 1 – 10 Overview**

**Rider 1**

Riders at Level 1 should be in the beginning stages of their equestrian development. At this stage, riders are well started with the basics of riding and are able to demonstrate a good position, knowledge of “aids” and an appreciation for “safe” habits. Riders at Level 1 should not be balancing on the horse’s mouth.Hands should be independent at walk. The use of a neck strap in the absence of a standing martingale (neck strap) is allowed to be used periodically at the trot. Contact is applied to step, turn and slow down, reins are then returned to an inactive state. The Rider 1 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component and a flat riding component.

**Rider 2**

Riders at Level 2 will demonstrate more polish and knowledge than Riders at Level 1 and will be more independent in both riding and stable management skills. The Rider 2 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component and a flat riding component.

**Rider 3**

Riders at Level 3, will now demonstrate the ability to ride independently. Hand contact should be as steady and sympathetic as possible to the horse’s month at all three paces with equal contact in both hands. They have to understand the impact of the hand effect on the horse’s mouth to achieve a goal, (i.e. slow down) and to release the pressure when the goal is achieved. There should be evidence of an effective position becoming established. The movements should be demonstrated with accuracy, although loss of bend etc. is to be expected at this level. Riders are expected to know and to demonstrate knowledge of correct diagonals throughout the riding portion, including in the “jumping” phase. Although riders at Level 3 are now expected to ride an individual flat test, other horses should be in the vicinity so riders will not have to deal with a panicked, lonely horse. The Rider 3 evaluation is comprised of a written test, a practical horse knowledge component, a flat riding component as well as a jumping component.

**Rider 4**

Riders at this level are starting to co-ordinate the use of independent aids (i.e. leg being used to support hand contact). Riders can establish but not maintain a soft sensation with the horse’s mouth and can feel when the horse is responding softly to the bit (i.e. relaxing jaw, mouthing bit – the “wet mouth”). They can demonstrate bend although not necessarily maintain bend. Riders are expected to complete a flat test and ride jumps at a height of 2′ (0.6m). Written and practical portions also tested at this level. The option continues at Rider Level 4 to take either the full riding component or only the flat component.

**Rider 5**

Riders at Level 5 have a solid awareness of a horse moving forward willingly and maintaining rhythm and relaxation. Riders should be able to recognize “tracking up” or lack thereof, by observing other horses in the test. This level introduces non-progressive transitions walk to canter/halt to trot. The rider should know the five different rein aids and the theory of their influence on the horse. Riders are in the LTED phase of Learning Training to Ride. Riders at this level will be jumping fences at a height of 2’3″ (0.7m) in addition to a flat test and a lunging phase. Written and practical portions also tested at this level. The option continues at Rider Level 5 to take either the full riding component or only the flat component.

**Rider 6**

Riders at Level 6 will demonstrate the ability to ride forward from leg to hand. They will be able to ride the horse forward with impulsion while maintaining rhythm, regularity and evenness of pace. The contact demonstrated will not impede the horse’s desire to move forward and is beginning to create a “round” outline, particularly at the trot. Overuse of the hand and lack of leg will be penalized. The evaluator should give consideration to a candidate who is riding a horse as forward as the horse’s ability allows without excessive speed. Riders at Level 6 will complete a flat test and jump fences at a height of 2’6″ (0.75m) in addition to a flat test and a lunging phase. Written and practical portions also tested at this level. The option continues at Rider Level 6 to take either the full riding component or only the flat component.

**Rider 7**

Riders at Level 7 should ride on consistent contact supported by the leg maintaining rhythm, suppleness contact and straightness. Riders are now aware of lateral and longitudinal suppleness and appropriate exercises to demonstrate suppleness. They will be executing simple lateral movements at walk. They can lengthen and shorten stride at trot. Riders at Level 7 should continue to demonstrate working trot and a true three beat working canter throughout the flat test. The Rider 7 should be able to identify the loss of true bend and true straightness by observing other horses. Riders at Level 7 will complete a flat test and jump fences at a height of 2’9″ (0.88m) in addition to a lunging component. Written and practical portions also tested at this level. The option continues at Rider Level 7 to take either the full riding component or only the flat component

**Rider 8**

Riders at Level 8 are competent with sound English equitation skills and are able to recognize “true” quality of movement. Riders are beginning to ride the horse with impulsion and engagement. They have the ability to achieve consistent bend and straightness as required and can demonstrate the ability to control the outside shoulder. They can demonstrate the achievement of bend by the correct use of the inside leg and outside rein. The horse should be consistently “round” at all paces. They are able to identify basic training problems and offer options for their correction. Over fences, the Rider at Level 8 will jump a medal type course of 2’9 – 3’ (0.85- 0.90m), with confidence and authority. The rider should be able to influence the horse in a positive fashion and improve its way of going. In addition to this there is a flat test and lunging component presented. Written and practical portions also tested at this level. The option continues at Rider Level 8 to take either the full riding component or only the flat component.

**Rider: 9/10**

Candidates for Rider 9 have realized that their skill progression has been achieved by doing, and now have developed their ability to assimilate information by exposure to various training opportunities. They can now apply it to their own practical application in the riding, training and care of their horses. In the jumping module, candidates will ride a predetermined medal style course set at 3’3″-3’6″ (1.0-1.10M). For the Dressage module, the test will be a Third Level. Candidates taking the Eventing module will be expected to ride at the Training Level. The Rider 10 will be required to perform all of the requirements of the Rider 9. However, the Rider 10 will be evaluated on their ability to ride three unfamiliar horses at the evaluation.

**Dressage:**



**Training Level**

Training Level is the first level of dressage tests and the place to begin dressage training. Horses at Training Level are tested on their willingness to perform the movements and their suppleness. There are three tests at Training Level. Horses must be able to perform the free walk, medium walk, working trot, working canter and halt. Riders must demonstrate they are able to shorten and lengthen reins. Movements also include circles, straight lines, bends and gait transitions.

**First Level**

First Level adds four challenges to Training Level. New movements include riding one loop or 10 meter half circle, which builds the foundation for serpentine work at higher levels, as well as the leg yield. Horses are asked to perform two sizes of circles, a 20 and 15 meter circle, demonstrating proper bend around the rider's inside leg. Horses also must be able to lengthen their stride and return to the working stride. Riders also may perform a simple Musical Freestyle at this level.

**Second Level**

Second level introduces movement related to collection. All of the movements at Training and First Levels are included at Second Level. Judges look for crisp and smooth transitions between collected and lengthened strides at various gaits. New movements introduced at Second Level include the counter canter, shoulder in, travers, simple lead changes, the rein back, and collected canter and trot.

**Third Level**

Third Level tests the horse's ability to extend after the collected work at the Second Level. Movements tested at the walk include the medium and free walk, with horses asked to lengthen and shorten their strides at the walk. The half turn on the haunches also must be executed at the walk. At the trot, horses are tested on the medium, extended and collected trots, with the half pass and shoulder in included in the trot. Canter movements include a medium and collected canter. Horses also must demonstrate flying lead changes at the canter and the counter canter, and they also must halt from the collected trot.

**Fourth Level**

Fourth Level tests the building blocks for the upper level movements of dressage. Horses must demonstrate impulsion, suppleness and willingness. New movements added to the prior levels include the walking half pirouette, quarter pirouette at the canter, and flying lead changes performed every third or fourth stride.

**Prix St. Georges**

Prix St. Georges begins the elite levels of dressage tested at international horse shows. Horses must be at least seven years old before performing the Prix St. Georges. All of the movements required at previous levels are tested, plus the volte (turn) in an 8 meter circle at the trot, as well as the halt from the collected canter.

**Intermediare Levels**

Intermediare Levels I and II set the stage for the ultimate dressage level, which follows Intermediare II, Grand Prix. At the Intermediare Levels, the zig zag half pass is added to the movements required from prior levels, and horses must now be able to change leads with every second or third stride instead of at the third or fourth stride. Intermediare II requires leads changes with every stride as well as the Passage and Piaffe.

**Grand Prix**

Grand Prix represents the pinnacle of dressage, and its the level most people are familiar with from watching the equestrian competition at the Olympics. The FEI governs Grand Prix dressage rules and requirements. While no new movements are added, the movements from Intermediare II must be performed as perfectly as possible.

**Show Jumping levels**

Class Name Height (m.) Height (ft.)

E Preliminary Test 0.85 2’9’’

A\* Novice Test 0.95 3’1’’

A\*\* Novice Test 1.05 3’5’’

L Elementary Test 1.15 3’9’’

M\* Medium Test 1.25 4’1’’

M\*\* Medium Test 1.35 4’5’’

S\* Advanced Test 1.40 4’7’’

S\*\* Advanced Test 1.45 4’9’’

S\*\*\* Advanced Test 1.50 4’11’’

S\*\*\*\* Advanced Test 1.55 5’1’’

If you get 4 double clears in a certain period you qualify for the second round. There is the first course most of the time 10 cm bigger.