



BIG HORSE
RIDING ACADEMY

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027 RIDING & HORSEMANSHIP CLASS PROGRAM

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Welcome to Big Horse Riding Academy

Welcome to Big Horse Riding Academy LLC (BHRA). Our mission is to develop safe, confident riders, capable horsemen and horsewomen, and responsible leaders through structured equine education. Students learn riding skills alongside responsibility, communication, patience, sportsmanship, and respect for the horse.

PROGRAM RELATIONSHIP & CLASS DEFINITION

BHRA is an independent, for-profit riding and horsemanship program operating at the Manes & Miracles of the River Valley facility. BHRA manages its own enrollment, instruction, tuition, policies, and liability. BHRA uses "class" for its structured riding and horsemanship instruction. Classes may be private, group, or shared family and may include mounted riding, unmounted horsemanship, classroom learning, or a combination. BHRA classes are recreational education and are not hippotherapy, medical treatment, or therapy services.

Academy Philosophy

- Horsemanship comes before riding.
- Safety comes first for riders, families, staff, and horses.
- Progress is earned through understanding and consistent practice, not rushed.
- Horses are partners and teachers, never equipment.
- Character, responsibility, and kindness matter as much as mounted skill.
- Every rider progresses at an individual pace.

Horse Sense Learning Levels® Curriculum

BHRA uses the Horse Sense Learning Levels® Curriculum through an authorized LLPro Membership. Mounted and unmounted instruction work together: riders learn safe handling, grooming, care, equipment, anatomy, horse behavior, stable management, and riding. Advancement is based on demonstrated competency and readiness, not age, attendance alone, or a promised timeline.

Rainbow Riders (ages 4-7)	Red	Orange	Yellow
Green	Blue	Purple	Black

Class Formats, Placement & Pricing

CLASS FORMAT	DURATION	PURPOSE
Private	60 minutes	One rider; individualized riding and horsemanship instruction.
Group	60 minutes	Small instructor-selected group; placement is based on safe independent skills.
Shared Family	90 minutes	Up to two family members share one reserved class time; price is not per rider.
Camps & Events	Varies	Seasonal camps, clinics, classroom learning, and educational events.
REQUIRED BEFORE GROUP PLACEMENT A 60-90 minute a la carte New Student Evaluation Ride (\$75) is required before any rider may be placed into a group class. BHRA reviews goals, experience, safety awareness, independent control, and rider-horse suitability. Completing the evaluation does not guarantee group placement; BHRA makes the final placement decision.		

Beginners generally begin with private instruction and lunge-line or guided work. Horse, instructor, format, and class assignments remain at BHRA's discretion.

Semester Structure & Tuition

Each semester is a 13-week commitment: 12 instructional weeks plus one Flex/Graduation Week. Flex Week may be used for the permitted make-up, evaluations, level testing, certificates, workshops, classroom learning, or a semester celebration. Regular Sunday classes are not scheduled.

CLASS FORMAT	PAY IN FULL	TWO PAYMENTS	THREE MONTHLY PAYMENTS
Private	\$850	2 x \$440 (\$880)	3 x \$305 (\$915)
Group	\$590	2 x \$305 (\$610)	3 x \$215 (\$645)
Shared Family	\$1,170	2 x \$605 (\$1,210)	3 x \$415 (\$1,245)

Tuition includes online payment processing and reserves the rider's weekly place for the full semester. Payment plans include a convenience premium and are not month-to-month enrollment. The full semester balance remains due despite missed classes, withdrawal, or early termination. Rates apply to the 2026-2027 class program and may change before a future enrollment period.

A la Carte Pricing

OPTION	FORMAT	PRICE	PLACEMENT / USE
Evaluation Ride	60-90 minutes	\$75	Required before placement into any group class.
Private	60 minutes	\$85	One rider; scheduled as instructor and horse availability allows.
Group	60 minutes	\$60 per rider	Available only after evaluation and instructor approval.
Shared Family	90 minutes	\$110 total	Up to two family members share one class time.

A la carte options are subject to instructor and horse availability and do not reserve a recurring time.

Cancellation, Attendance & Make-Up Policy

SEMESTER TUITION & RESERVED PLACE

Semester tuition reserves the rider's weekly place for the entire 13-week semester. The full semester balance remains due regardless of student absences, missed or forfeited classes, withdrawal, or early termination. Payment plans are convenience options and are not month-to-month enrollment.

Student Cancellations & Absences

- **48-hour notice.** To qualify for a student make-up, the family must notify BHRA through BHRA's designated communication method at least 48 hours before the scheduled class begins. Notice received later is a late cancellation. Failure to notify BHRA before the scheduled start time is a no-show.
- **One eligible make-up.** With timely notice, each rider is eligible for one make-up for one student absence per semester. This is the rider's only student-absence make-up, regardless of the reason for the absence.
- **Available scheduling.** The make-up may be scheduled in an appropriate opening, when one exists, or during Flex/Graduation Week. BHRA will make a reasonable effort to work with the family, but cannot guarantee a particular day, time, horse, instructor, mounted activity, or private/group format.
- **Forfeited classes.** No-shows, late cancellations, and additional student absences are forfeited. If a rider cannot attend, declines, cancels, or misses an offered or scheduled make-up, both the original class and the make-up opportunity are forfeited. Arriving late does not extend the scheduled class or create make-up eligibility.
- **No transfer or future value.** Make-ups are nontransferable, have no cash or credit value, and cannot be carried into another semester.

BHRA Changes, Cancellations & Weather

- **BHRA's safety decision.** BHRA makes the final decision about safe operating conditions. Heat or cold, lightning, high winds, flooding, ice, poor air quality, unsafe footing, facility conditions, instructor availability, or an equine health or welfare concern may delay, shorten, modify, move, or cancel a class.
- **Modified instruction counts.** A shortened class or a class changed to unmounted horsemanship or classroom learning is a completed class and does not qualify for a make-up. A rider who chooses not to attend or participate because the class is unmounted or otherwise modified forfeits that class.
- **Full BHRA cancellation.** If BHRA cancels a class without providing instruction, that cancellation does not use the rider's one student-absence make-up. BHRA will offer available make-up options, which may include an appropriate schedule opening, Flex/Graduation Week, or an alternate group-style Equine Experience make-up day. The make-up may differ from the rider's usual class.
- **Multiple weather cancellations.** When severe weather or facility conditions affect multiple classes or days, BHRA may designate group-style Equine Experience opportunities, including mounted and/or unmounted activities, as the make-up for affected classes.
- **Family availability.** BHRA will make a reasonable effort to provide useful options, but cannot guarantee that an option will fit every family's schedule. If the rider cannot attend or declines the available option or options, the canceled class is forfeited and no refund, credit, transfer, or carryover is due.
- **Notification.** Families will be contacted through BHRA's designated communication method. Conditions can change quickly, so a decision may be made close to class time. Never assume a class is canceled unless BHRA sends notice.

A La Carte Classes, Camps & Events

Unless separate written terms state otherwise, participant cancellations and no-shows for A La Carte classes, camps, clinics, and events forfeit all amounts paid. No make-up, refund, credit, transfer, or carryover is provided. If BHRA cancels, BHRA will communicate the applicable rescheduling or alternative arrangement.

Student Promise & Expectations

STUDENT PROMISE

I will respect my horse, instructors, volunteers, fellow riders, and myself. I will listen, work hard, care for equipment, encourage others, and choose safe, kind behavior.

- Follow instructor directions immediately, especially around horses and equipment.
- Arrive prepared, participate in mounted and unmounted learning, ask questions respectfully, and keep phones put away unless authorized.
- Use calm voices and safe body language; no bullying, teasing, threats, or rough behavior.
- Treat academy horses, tack, tools, and property with care.
- Tell an instructor promptly about pain, fear, damaged equipment, unsafe behavior, or a concern about a horse.

Parent & Guardian Code of Conduct

- Support the instructor's safety, horse-selection, class-format, and advancement decisions.
- Encourage effort and progress without sideline coaching, comparison, or pressure for a specific skill, horse, or timeline.
- Communicate concerns privately and respectfully with Jill Cwiak Warden outside active instruction, not through the student.
- Supervise non-participants, keep them outside horse-working areas unless invited, and follow all facility-access rules.
- Keep family and rider information current; respect people, horses, and property.

Unsafe or abusive conduct, repeated policy violations, or nonpayment may result in suspension or dismissal; immediate removal may occur for safety or horse welfare. Dismissal does not cancel tuition due.

Communication Standards

BHRA uses family contact details for scheduling, weather, progress, billing, and safety. Messages with minors remain professional and include a parent/guardian whenever practical; bring concerns directly to Jill Cwiak Warden. Photo and video recording or sharing must follow the approval rules in the Photo, Video & Privacy Choices section.

Required Attire & Equipment

ITEM	STANDARD
Riding helmet	A properly fitted ASTM/SEI-certified equestrian helmet is required whenever mounted and whenever BHRA directs. Helmet use reduces risk but does not eliminate it.
Footwear	Closed-toe riding boots or sturdy shoes with a secure heel and smooth sole. Open-toe shoes, sandals, Crocs-style footwear, and loose slip-on shoes are not permitted around horses.
Clothing	Long pants and weather-appropriate layers are strongly recommended. Clothing must allow safe movement and may not be excessively loose or likely to snag.
Hair & jewelry	Long hair must be secured. Dangling jewelry, scarves, or accessories that could catch on tack or fencing should be removed.

Barn Rules

- Walk - never run - in the barn, arena, aisles, gates, and horse areas.
- Do not enter a stall, pasture, pen, tack room, feed area, or arena without staff permission.
- Do not feed treats, hay, grain, supplements, or grass to any horse without permission.
- Do not open gates, move equipment, climb fences, sit on gates, or approach a tied horse without direction.
- No horseplay, shouting, throwing objects, smoking, vaping, alcohol, illegal drugs, or unapproved pets.
- Use only the horse and equipment assigned by the instructor; report damage immediately.
- Park, wait, observe, and use facility areas only as directed. Therapy and staff-only areas are not part of BHRA class access.

Horse Welfare & Instructional Decisions

The horse's physical and emotional welfare comes before the day's instructional plan. BHRA may change or end an activity, substitute a horse, limit work, or provide an unmounted class because of heat, fatigue, soundness, behavior, workload, footing, tack fit, or rider-horse suitability. Students must use humane handling: no hitting, kicking, jerking, chasing, yelling at, or deliberately frightening a horse.

Safety, Emergencies & Incident Response

Equine activities involve inherent risk. Every participant must remain attentive, follow directions, and stay within assigned areas. In an emergency, the instructor controls the scene. Parents and students should remain calm, avoid crowding, and follow staff directions so responders can work safely.

SITUATION	BHRA RESPONSE
Fall or head impact	Stop activity, secure the horse and scene, assess for emergency signs, notify the parent/guardian, and call EMS when indicated. A rider with a suspected concussion will not remount that day and must be cleared by a healthcare provider before returning.
Medical emergency	Call 911 when needed, provide first aid within staff training, use the emergency authorization, and contact the parent/guardian and listed emergency contact.
Severe weather	Suspend mounted activity and move students to the designated safe area. Lightning, heat, ice, wind, flooding, or unsafe footing may change or cancel the class.
Fire	Evacuate people to the designated meeting area. Students and families must not attempt to retrieve horses, equipment, or personal items unless directed.
Loose or distressed horse	Students stop, remain calm, and follow staff directions. Do not chase, corner, feed, or attempt to catch the horse without permission.
Missing child or security concern	Notify BHRA immediately, secure exits as directed, begin the facility response plan, and contact law enforcement when appropriate.

Concussion standard: a rider with a suspected concussion is removed from riding that day and remains out until cleared by a healthcare provider. Reference: CDC HEADS UP, Responding to a Sports-Related Concussion, <https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/response/index.html>.

Incident Documentation

BHRA may document falls, injuries, near misses, equipment concerns, unsafe conduct, and horse-welfare events. Families must provide accurate information and follow any return-to-participation instructions.

Child Safety & Youth Protection

- BHRA has zero tolerance for abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination, grooming behavior, retaliation, or sexual misconduct.
- Instruction should remain observable and interruptible. Two-adult visibility practices are used whenever practical.
- Physical contact is limited to appropriate instruction, spotting, safety, first aid, or emergency assistance and should be explained when circumstances allow.
- Private or secret communications, gifts intended to create secrecy, inappropriate relationships, and one-on-one transportation without guardian authorization are prohibited.
- Safety or conduct concerns should be reported promptly to Jill Cwiak Warden. Immediate danger or suspected abuse should also be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Medical Information & Emergency Authorization

Before participation, the parent/guardian or adult rider must provide current emergency contacts and disclose medical conditions, allergies, medications, physical limitations, learning needs, behavioral considerations, or prior concussions that could affect safe participation. BHRA is not a medical provider and relies on the information supplied by the family and on healthcare-provider restrictions.

- Do not attend when the rider has a contagious illness, fever, vomiting, or another condition that makes participation unsafe.
- Bring required rescue medication or emergency devices according to the rider's written care plan and discuss access with BHRA before the class.
- BHRA may call 911 and obtain emergency medical care when staff reasonably believe it is necessary. The participant/family is responsible for medical costs.
- A rider may be asked for written medical clearance before returning after injury, surgery, concussion, or a condition that could affect safe riding.

Photo, Video & Privacy Choices

Families may opt in or out of BHRA using photos or video for academy social media, marketing, educational materials, and program celebrations. Declining media permission does not affect enrollment, and permission may be changed prospectively by written notice.

SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING REQUIRES APPROVAL

- Prior BHRA approval is required.
- Every identifiable adult must give consent.
- A parent/guardian must give consent for every identifiable minor.

All three requirements apply before posting, tagging, texting, live-streaming, or otherwise sharing BHRA photos or videos.

Photography and recording are never permitted in therapy, medical, private, or staff-only areas or when they interfere with safety or instruction. BHRA limits access to enrollment and medical information to people who need it for scheduling, instruction, billing, safety, or legal records.

Before the First Class

- Return the signed Handbook Acknowledgment & Enrollment Agreement.
- Return the separate signed Equine Activity Liability Release.
- Complete current emergency, medical, communication, and authorized-pickup information.
- Pay tuition in full or activate the approved payment plan.
- Confirm proper helmet, footwear, clothing, class time, and arrival instructions.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Contact Jill Cwiak Warden, Owner & Head Instructor, at 479-275-0978. The handbook may be updated when safety, legal, facility, insurance, or program needs change. Families will receive notice of material updates.

STUDENT INFORMATION, EMERGENCY & SCHEDULING FORM

2026-2027 Class Program | Confidential Student Record

Please print clearly and notify BHRA in writing whenever this information changes.

STUDENT & FAMILY INFORMATION

Student's legal name: _____	Preferred name: _____
Date of birth: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____
Parent/Guardian 1: _____	Parent/Guardian 2: _____
Primary phone: _____	Email: _____
Home address: _____	City/State/ZIP: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT & HEALTH INFORMATION

Emergency contact: _____	Relationship: _____
Primary phone: _____	Alternate phone: _____
ALLERGIES: ☐ None known Food, medication, environmental, insect, or animal allergies; reaction/severity: _____	
RESCUE MEDICATION / EMERGENCY DEVICE: ☐ None Name, location, and instructions (for example: inhaler or epinephrine): _____	
MEDICAL & SAFETY INFORMATION: Conditions, medications, restrictions, prior injuries/concussions, or other information affecting safe participation: _____	
LEARNING & SUPPORT INFORMATION: Learning, sensory, behavioral, communication, or accessibility needs that may affect instruction: _____	

AUTHORIZED DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

A minor may be released only to a listed adult unless BHRA receives written notice. Photo ID may be requested.

APPROVED ADULT	RELATIONSHIP	PHONE	AUTHORIZED FOR
_____	_____	_____	☐ Drop-off ☐ Pick-up
_____	_____	_____	☐ Drop-off ☐ Pick-up
_____	_____	_____	☐ Drop-off ☐ Pick-up

RIDING BACKGROUND & GOALS

Prior riding or horse experience: _____
Student's goals for this semester: _____
Fears, confidence needs, or anything the instructor should know: _____

SCHEDULING & PLACEMENT

Preferred class format: ☐ Private ☐ Group ☐ Shared Family ☐ Unsure

Preferred day(s) / time(s): _____	Alternate availability #1: _____
Alternate availability #2: _____	Other scheduling limits: _____

Scheduling requests are not guaranteed. Group placement requires the a la carte evaluation ride and instructor approval.

I confirm this information is accurate and will notify BHRA promptly of changes.

Parent/Guardian or Adult Participant Signature: _____	Date: _____
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HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT & ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

2026-2027 Class Program

Student/Participant: _____	Semester: _____
Parent/Guardian: _____	Primary Phone: _____
Class Format: ☐ Private ☐ Group ☐ Shared Family	Payment: ☐ Full ☐ Two ☐ Three

INITIAL EACH STATEMENT

_____	I received the BHRA Student & Parent Handbook and understand BHRA is a separate, for-profit riding and horsemanship program, not a therapy or medical provider.
_____	I understand the curriculum and rider-placement process, including the required a la carte evaluation before any group placement, and accept instructor authority over horse and class assignments.
_____	I accept the full 13-week tuition commitment. Payment plans are convenience options and are not month-to-month enrollment.
_____	I understand the 48-hour notice, one eligible make-up, BHRA cancellation, weather, forfeiture, and no-refund policies.
_____	I agree to the required attire, helmet, barn-safety, horse-welfare, and facility-access rules.
_____	I agree to the Student Expectations and Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct, including respectful communication and no sideline coaching.
_____	I understand BHRA's youth-protection and emergency procedures and will promptly report safety or conduct concerns.
_____	I understand that posting, tagging, texting, live-streaming, or otherwise sharing BHRA photos or videos requires all three: prior BHRA approval; consent from every identifiable adult; and parent/guardian consent for every identifiable minor.
_____	I have provided accurate medical, emergency-contact, learning, and authorized-pickup information and will update it when it changes.
_____	I understand a separate Equine Activity Liability Release must be signed before participation.

COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

Preferred contact: ☐ Text ☐ Email ☐ Phone Photo/video permission for BHRA use: ☐ Yes ☐ No

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION

If I cannot be reached, I authorize BHRA to call 911, provide first aid within staff training, and obtain emergency medical treatment reasonably believed necessary for the participant. I accept responsibility for resulting medical costs.

By signing, I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to the handbook and the selections above. I understand that safety policies may be updated and that material changes will be communicated.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____	Date: _____
Adult Participant Signature: _____	Date: _____
Student Signature (if minor): _____	Date: _____

BHRA office use: Received _____ Invoice _____ Release _____ Schedule _____

EQUINE ACTIVITY LIABILITY RELEASE

Assumption of Risk, Release, Hold Harmless & Indemnity Agreement

Participant: _____	Date of Birth: _____
Parent/Guardian (if minor): _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	City/State/ZIP: _____

WARNING

Under Arkansas law, an equine activity sponsor, livestock activity sponsor, livestock owner, livestock facility, and livestock auction market are not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities or livestock activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities or livestock activities.

1. Activities and inherent risks. I understand that classes, riding, mounting, dismounting, handling, grooming, leading, groundwork, barn work, camps, clinics, and related equine activities involve unavoidable and inherent risks. Horses are large, powerful, unpredictable animals that may bite, kick, buck, rear, bolt, spook, stumble, fall, collide, or react to people, animals, equipment, sounds, weather, footing, or unseen conditions. Risks also include falls, equipment failure, acts of other participants, property damage, serious injury, disability, and death.

2. Voluntary participation and assumption of risk. I voluntarily choose for myself and/or the minor participant to take part. I knowingly assume all inherent and ordinary risks of equine and barn activities, whether described here or not, and accept responsibility for following instructions and remaining within authorized areas.

3. Release and hold harmless. To the fullest extent permitted by Arkansas law, I release and hold harmless Big Horse Riding Academy LLC, Jill Cwiak Warden, its instructors, employees, independent contractors, volunteers, horse owners, agents, insurers, and the facility owner/lessor (the Released Parties) from claims, demands, or causes of action for injury, death, or property damage arising from inherent risks or ordinary negligence connected with participation, except claims that cannot lawfully be released.

4. Indemnification. I agree to indemnify and defend the Released Parties from third-party claims, losses, or expenses caused by my or the participant's intentional misconduct, rule violations, misrepresentations, or negligent acts, to the extent permitted by law.

5. Health, ability, equipment, and rules. I have disclosed conditions that may affect safe participation and will update BHRA when they change. I understand BHRA relies on those disclosures and may determine that an activity, horse, equipment choice, or accommodation is not safe. I agree to follow all instructions, wear a properly fitted ASTM/SEI-certified equestrian helmet when required, and refrain from participation while impaired by alcohol, drugs, illness, or medication that makes participation unsafe.

6. Emergency medical authorization. If I cannot be reached, I authorize BHRA to call 911, provide first aid within staff training, and obtain emergency medical care reasonably believed necessary. I accept responsibility for all related costs and authorize the release of emergency information to responders and treating providers.

7. Governing law, severability, and duration. Arkansas law governs this agreement. If any provision is unenforceable, the remaining provisions continue in effect. This release applies to BHRA activities during the 2026-2027 program year unless replaced by a later signed agreement. I understand it does not waive rights or liabilities that Arkansas law does not permit to be waived.

I HAVE READ THIS AGREEMENT, UNDERSTAND THAT I AM GIVING UP SUBSTANTIAL LEGAL RIGHTS, HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS, AND SIGN VOLUNTARILY.

Adult Participant Signature: _____	Date: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature for Minor: _____	Date: _____
Printed Parent/Guardian Name: _____	Relationship: _____
Emergency Contact: _____	Phone: _____