



**EQUINE-**  
**ASSISTED THERAPY**

# Participant Handbook

*Together, we are  
“changing lives one hoof print at a time”*

Main Facility:  
3369 Hwy 109 Wildwood, MO 63038

Satellite Facility:  
13525 Clayton Road Town and Country, MO 63141

## **How To Contact Us:**

Main office  
314-971-0605  
[info@eatherapy.org](mailto:info@eatherapy.org)  
[www.eatherapy.org](http://www.eatherapy.org)

Katie Gancarz - Office Manager  
[info@eatherapy.org](mailto:info@eatherapy.org)

Emelia Rief - Volunteer Coordinator  
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Lulu Bogolin - Executive Director  
[lulu@eatherapy.org](mailto:lulu@eatherapy.org)

## **Our Mission:**

At Equine Assisted Therapy we are all about heart to hoof connections. We believe in the power of horses to open doors to personal breakthroughs for individuals facing emotional, physical, and mental challenges. It is our mission to create life enriching horsemanship experiences that uplift and empower our participants to enhance their well-being.

*Equine-Assisted Therapy, Inc. is a 501C3 non-profit*

*Missouri Equine Liability Law: Under Missouri Law, an Equine Professional or any employee thereof, is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to the revised statutes of Missouri R.S. MO.537.325*

## **Safety Rules**

The following guidelines have been developed for your safety. Please follow all of these rules while at our facilities. Failure to follow these rules can result in your dismissal from our facilities and our programs.

1. NO SMOKING ON OUR PROPERTY!
2. EAT prohibits the possession, sale, consumption, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, or any illegal drugs by employees, contract workers, participants, or volunteers while on the premises of EAT in Wildwood or any satellite location; other than EAT planned events/fundraisers as stated in our drug and alcohol policy.
3. All weapons must remain in vehicles.
4. Do not feed horses or any other animals on the property.
5. Outside animals are not allowed on the property unless pre-approved by the Wildwood Office Team. Certified service animals are allowed, notify the Wildwood Office Team beforehand.
6. All children must be directly monitored by an adult at all times while on property. This adult must not be involved in any other activity.
7. Interacting with all animals is done at your own risk. Please monitor children.
8. All phones must be turned to silent or vibrate when on property in order to eliminate distractions.
9. Clean up after yourself and throw away your trash.
10. Only scheduled leaders, tack captains, and instructors are allowed inside the gates of the arena. **Participants** and sidewalkers must wait outside the gate of the arena until asked to enter by the instructor.
11. Only tack captains, instructors, barn buddies, maintenance team, and staff are allowed to enter into pastures.
12. The instructor is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the class from the first horse brought into the arena until the last horse is taken out and put in the appropriate pasture. Please listen to and follow all directions given by the class instructor.

*\*Rules apply to all EAT staff, volunteers, participants, families, and visitors\**

### **Dismissal Policy**

EAT reserves the right to dismiss any person from the facility and from the program if their behavior is putting themselves, a participant, staff, other volunteers, or the horse's mental or physical health in jeopardy, or there is failure to follow EAT's policies and code of conduct; or behavior as deemed inappropriate by the Executive Director or Staff.

### **Photographs and Video Policy**

You are welcome to take photos, but any images or videos featuring other people, volunteers, or participants must be submitted to the EAT office team for review and approval to ensure proper photo releases are in place. The release grants EAT the right to share content, but not individuals outside the team. Once approved and shared on EAT's official pages, you may share it from there. Photos of participants cannot be posted directly by anyone outside the EAT team. Violation of this policy will result in removal of the post and could lead to dismissal from EAT's facility and program. Thank you for helping protect the privacy and safety of those at EAT.

### **You can follow Equine Assisted Therapy on :**

**Facebook** - facebook.com/eatherapy

**Volunteer Facebook Group** - facebook.com/groups/eatherapyvolunteers

**Instagram** - [instagram.com/eatherapy\\_mo/](https://www.instagram.com/eatherapy_mo/)

## **Welcome and General Information**

Thank you for your interest in our programs at Equine Assisted Therapy. We look forward to working with you! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at **314-971-0605** or **info@eatherapy.org**.

### **Getting Started:**

Please complete the Participant Application that can be found on our website or in our office. You may mail the application to our main facility address at:

3369 Hwy 109 Wildwood, MO 63038

or you may email it to info@eatherapy.org or fax it to 636-587-6100.

Once your paperwork is received our office will let you know and you will be placed on our waiting list.

Once we have received your application our team will discuss what program we feel will be the best fit for the participant.

## **Our Programs**

### **Equine-Assisted Activities**

Our EAA program combines traditional horsemanship skills with gross and fine motor activities in a fun and social setting. Participants leave the traditional clinical environment behind, gaining independence while improving balance, coordination, flexibility, and muscle strength through riding.

### **Equine-Assisted Learning**

EAL is a hands-on, non-riding program where participants engage in experiential education with horses. By practicing "natural horsemanship" ground skills, individuals can develop or rediscover essential life skills. This program helps both children and adults build self-confidence, establish boundaries, enhance social skills, and interpret body language. Through these interactions with horses, participants learn to navigate and cope with everyday life situations, making it especially beneficial for those dealing with traumatic events or experiences. We offer both individual and group sessions.

## **Silver Saddles**

Designed for individuals aged 55 and older, Silver Saddles focuses on learning the fundamentals of horse riding. This program promotes flexibility, balance, coordination, memory retention, and socialization. Whether you're new to riding or have previous experience, Silver Saddles supports both personal and physical development

## **Boots in the Barn**

Boots in the Barn is a non-riding program tailored for Veterans and First Responders. This unique program offers a space for those who have served our country and community to relax, replenish, and reintegrate. Similar to our EAL program, it focuses on finding personal peace and purpose through working with horses or volunteering. Both individual and group sessions are available.

## **Program Policies**

### **General Requirements**

- All applications must be updated annually, including a signed physician's statement.
- Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) is a self-pay center and does not bill insurance.
- All invoices are due upon receipt.

### **Safety Guidelines**

- Every rider must wear an equestrian helmet that meets ASTM/SEI, PAS015, and VG1 standards.
  - Helmets are available for use at the center.
  - If using your own helmet, it is your responsibility to ensure it is not expired and is in good condition.
- All participants must dress appropriately for the weather and wear closed-toe shoes.
  - Flip-flops, Crocs, or sandals are not allowed.
- Jackets must be zipped or buttoned at all times.

## Weight Limit

- The weight limit for riding varies by horse, with a maximum of **225 pounds**.
- Weights are taken at the center every 12 weeks, with riders wearing their helmet and shoes.

## Behavior and Supervision

- All riders, family members, and caregivers must abide by EAT's code of conduct.
- No outside animals are allowed on the property. The exception to this rule is service animals. Please let us know ahead of time if you will be bringing a service animal to your session.
- All children must be monitored and directly supervised by the adult who brought them. Barn rules and the code of conduct apply to everyone on-site.

## Photo and Social Media Policy

- Photos containing individuals other than your participant must be sent to the office for approval before being posted on social media.
- Once the office team has approved and posted the photo, you may share it to your page.

## Class Schedule

- **Session Format:** Classes operate in 6-week sessions, with one week off between sessions.
- **Class Length:** Classes are 30-40 minutes long, depending on the participant's placement.
- **Holidays:** Classes will not be held on major holidays. Check our website for the class calendar.

## **Arriving at the Barn: What to Expect**

### **Plan Your Arrival Time**

- Arrive **10 minutes before your scheduled class time** to allow for preparation and getting a helmet on.

### **Parking**

- Handicap parking is available closest to the building. Please reserve these spots for those who need them.

### **Entering the Barn**

- Use the **main lobby door** to check in with the office team.
- Wait in the **designated waiting area** until your instructor invites you into the arena. Use this time to stretch or prepare with our Equicizer.

## **What to Wear to the Barn**

### **Clothing and Footwear**

- Dress appropriately for the weather.
- Wear **closed-toed shoes**. Recommended options include:
  - Muck or rain boots
  - Hiking boots
  - Riding boots
  - Tennis shoes
- Pants such as jeans, sweats, or leggings are more comfortable for riding. Avoid shorts, as they may cause discomfort.

### **Outerwear**

- Jackets or coats must be zipped or buttoned when worn.
- In winter, gloves are recommended to keep hands warm and out of pockets.



## **Attendance and Cancellation Policies**

### **Notifying the Office**

- Notify the office team as soon as possible if you cannot attend your scheduled session.
- We do not offer makeup classes for missed sessions. However, with **24-hour notice**, you will receive a credit toward the next session.
- **Without 24-hour notice:** Full price will be charged for the missed session, regardless of payment type or scholarship situation.

### **Planned Absences**

- For planned absences, such as vacations, provide dates in advance by:
  - **Texting:** 314-971-0605
  - **Emailing:** info@eatherapy.org

### **Participant Tardiness**

- If a participant is late, their session time will be reduced accordingly to keep the schedule on track.
- If a participant is **15 or more minutes late**, they will **not be allowed to ride** for that session.

## **EAT Class Cancellations**

### **Cancellation Notifications**

- If EAT cancels a class, you will be notified via text or email and asked to confirm receipt.
- If we do not receive a confirmation, we will make one additional attempt to contact you via text or phone call.
- You will receive a credit for any class canceled by EAT.

### **Weather Related Cancellations**

- **Heat Policy - classes will be cancelled due to heat if:**
  - A heat advisory is in effect.
  - The actual temperature exceeds **80°F**, and the combined temperature and humidity reach **150 or higher**.
  - “Feels like” temperature is **95°F or higher**.

- **Cold Policy - classes will be cancelled due to weather if:**
  - A winter weather advisory is in effect.
  - The actual temperature is **20°F or below**.
  - “Feels like” temperature is **15°F or below**.
  - Rockwood School District cancels classes or after-school activities.
- **Tornado Sirens:**
  - If tornado sirens sound within a few hours of morning or evening classes, the corresponding session (morning or evening) will be canceled, and you will be notified.
  - If tornado sirens sound in the morning but conditions clear by afternoon, evening classes will proceed as scheduled.

### **Participant Dismissal and Discharge Policy**

Equine Assisted Therapy reserves the right to dismiss a participant or family member from the program and facility under certain circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, instances where the participant or their guests:

- Endanger the mental or physical health of themselves, staff, instructors, volunteers, or animals.
- Fail to follow Equine Assisted Therapy’s policies or code of conduct.
- Frequently miss visits or have excessive no-shows.
- Exceed the weight limits for riding.
- Fail to adhere to established safety procedures.

Dismissal may also occur if:

- A condition is diagnosed or deteriorates to the point where horseback riding is no longer beneficial or poses a risk to the participant’s safety or well-being.
- Safety concerns arise for the participant, staff, or others involved.

Equine Assisted Therapy reserves the right to deny services to any individual due to safety concerns for the applicant, horses, volunteers, staff, or facility. This decision will align with PATH Intl. operating guidelines and contraindications.