

PONY PARTNERSHIPS



Safeguarding Children Policy – 2025–2026

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Pony Partnerships CIC (“Pony Partnerships”) safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people we work with. It applies to all adults who work for or on behalf of Pony Partnerships in any capacity, including employees, sessional workers, trainees and volunteers.

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. We operate a child-centred approach in which the best interests, views and lived experience of the child are paramount. No single professional has a full picture of a child’s needs; timely information-sharing and decisive action are essential.

For the purposes of this policy, children are all persons under 18.

2. Policy aims

Pony Partnerships will:

- Provide a safe, trauma-informed environment for children to learn, engage and receive therapeutic support.
- Identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of, or experiencing, significant harm and act promptly.
- Work effectively with parents/carers and safeguarding partners.
- Recruit and manage staff/volunteers safely and challenge unsafe practice.
- Meet statutory duties, keep accurate records, and continuously improve safeguarding practice.

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner following incidents, changes in law/guidance, or learning from audits.

3. Legal and policy context

This policy aligns with and should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- Children Act 1989 & 2004; Education Act 2002 (s.175/157).
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent duty).
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR (safeguarding exemption).
- Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010 (incl. Public Sector Equality Duty).
- Local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (Derby/Derbyshire; Nottingham/Nottinghamshire).

Where a child is placed with us by a commissioning school/LA from another area, we will follow Derby/Derbyshire procedures for immediate action and liaise with the child’s home authority.

4. Principles

- **Child-centred:** the child’s voice, wishes and feelings inform decisions.
- **Do something:** staff maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and act on concerns.
- **Proportionate & timely:** take the least intrusive action that keeps a child safe, without delay.
- **Partnership:** share information appropriately; work with parents/carers and agencies.
- **Prevention & early help:** respond early to need and vulnerability (including online).
- **Equality & inclusion:** safeguard all children, with additional vigilance for those with SEND, in care, missing education, EHE, or otherwise vulnerable.

5. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities of staff

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All adults working for or on behalf of Pony Partnerships must:

- Provide a safe environment; know how to identify and respond to concerns (including online).
- Read and understand KCSIE (2025) Part 1 (or Annex A where appropriate) and our Staff Code of Conduct.
- Complete and refresh safeguarding training appropriate to role (incl. Prevent, online safety, child-on-child abuse, mental health indicators, SEND vulnerabilities).
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL (or deputy) and record them the same day.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Danielle Mills, Director & Manager – 07505 951793 – info@ponypartnerships.com

Deputy DSL:

- Claire Jacob – 07768185391 – claire@ponypartnerships.com

(See **Appendix A1** for detailed role descriptions.)

6. Ensuring a safe environment for all children

We will:

- Maintain a physically and emotionally safe setting; model respectful, bounded behaviour.
- Proactively teach and reinforce expectations; respond to behaviour as communication of need.
- Consider mental health as part of safeguarding; know that emerging mental health issues can be an indicator or consequence of abuse/neglect.
- Address risks **online and offline** (devices, images, messaging, gaming); align with our Device User Agreement, Data Protection & Privacy Policy, Photography & Social Media Policy, and Filtering/Monitoring arrangements with our IT provider (Evolve).
- Ensure external providers on site supply a **Letter of Comfort** confirming safer recruitment and DBS standards equivalent to ours (and share enhanced DBS details where content requires risk assessment).
- Supervise volunteers appropriately and never place them in unsupervised regulated activity without checks.

7. Parents/guardians accompanying learners

Where it has been agreed in advance that a parent/guardian will attend or wait on site:

- **Prior notice & planning:** required due to no public waiting area.
- **Safety Contract & Emergency Details:** parents/guardians must complete our **Safety & Conduct Agreement** and **Emergency Details Form (Appendix A10)** beforehand.
- **Supervision:** parents/guardians must be **accompanied at all times** by staff and **must not** be left alone with any child other than their own.
- **Boundaries:** they must follow staff instruction, safeguarding rules, confidentiality and photography restrictions.
- **Non-compliance:** may result in being asked to leave and/or safeguarding referral as appropriate.

8. Working with parents and carers

We work openly and respectfully with parents/carers, keep accurate contact and consent information, and share concerns unless doing so would place the child at increased risk. We signpost support and involve families in plans wherever safe and appropriate.

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9. Acting on concerns (reporting and referrals)

If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm: call **999** and inform the DSL.

Otherwise:

1. **Listen, reassure, explain you must share the concern.**
2. **Report to DSL/DDSL immediately** (do not delay if DSL unavailable).
3. **Record** on the same day using the Safeguarding Report Form (**Appendix A6**).
4. DSL decides and documents the response: manage internally, **Early Help**, or **refer to Children's Social Care** under s.17/s.47 (and inform parents unless unsafe).
5. If the child's situation does not improve, the DSL **escalates** per local procedures.

Staff **must not** investigate. (See **Appendix A2** and **A4** for step-by-step guidance and flow chart. Local contacts in **Appendix A5**.)

10. Multi-agency working & information sharing

We work to local multi-agency arrangements and **share information** that is **necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure** in line with **UK GDPR** and **DPA 2018** safeguarding provisions. Lack of consent **must not** prevent sharing where there is risk of harm. We keep auditable records of decisions and rationales. (See **Appendix A3**.)

11. Low-level concerns, whistleblowing & allegations against staff/volunteers

Low-level concerns (below harm threshold)

All staff are encouraged to report any concerning, ambiguous or boundary-blurring behaviour by adults (e.g., over-familiarity, one-to-one in secluded areas, breaches of digital boundaries). Report to the DSL; record on the **Low-Level Concerns Form (Appendix A8)**. The DSL reviews patterns, takes proportionate action and seeks advice where needed.

Allegations meeting the harm threshold

Where an adult has:

- harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a relevant offence;
- behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they **may not be suitable** to work with children (including conduct in their private life, online, or in the community),

the Manager/DSL will **immediately** contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** for advice **within 1 working day** and follow directions. We will support all parties, protect confidentiality, and consider suspension/adjustments where necessary. We will meet our **duty to refer to the DBS** where required. (See **Appendix A9**.)

Whistleblowing

Staff who have concerns about safeguarding practice or the handling of concerns should raise them with the DSL/Director/Board. If they feel unable to do so, they may contact the **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (0800 028 0285)**.

12. Safer recruitment and selection of staff/volunteers

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We apply robust safer recruitment in line with **KCSIE 2025**: scrutinised applications, employment history checks, references, identity/Right to Work, qualification checks, **enhanced DBS with children's barred list where eligible**, and risk-assessed checks for overseas history. Induction includes code of conduct, safeguarding and role-specific training. Ongoing vigilance continues post-appointment.

13. Record keeping, confidentiality & data protection

- Concerns, decisions and rationales are recorded contemporaneously on secure systems and stored separately from therapeutic/education records.
- Access is strictly **need-to-know**.
- Records follow the child where appropriate (with secure transfer and receipt confirmation).
- We comply with **UK GDPR/DPA 2018**, the **safeguarding exemption**, and our **Data Protection & Privacy Policy**.

14. Training, supervision and safeguarding culture

- **Induction:** KCSIE 2025 Part 1 (or Annex A), code of conduct, reporting routes, behaviour/online safety, Prevent.
- **Refreshers:** at least annually (and in-year updates as required).
- **Role-specific:** DSL updated regularly; first aid; positive handling (if applicable); mental health awareness; online safety.
- **Supervision/reflective practice:** embedded in our clinical and education teams to notice vulnerability, challenge unsafe norms and sustain professional curiosity.

A1. Safeguarding roles & responsibilities

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- Trustees/Board: oversight; policy approval; safe culture; ensure resources; LADO liaison if allegation against Manager/DSL; review data/learning.
- Manager/DSL: implement policy; ensure availability; case management; inter-agency liaison; quality assurance; training plan; safer recruitment oversight; escalate where no improvement.
- All staff/volunteers: know the policy, recognise and report concerns immediately; record accurately; maintain professional boundaries on- and offline.

A2. If information is disclosed: staff guidance

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- Listen
- Don't promise confidentiality
- Use open questions only
- Reassure
- Explain next steps
- Report to DSL
- Write it up same day using child's words
- Seek support if needed.

A3. Seven principles for information sharing (UK GDPR/DPA 2018)

1. Lawful, fair, transparent.

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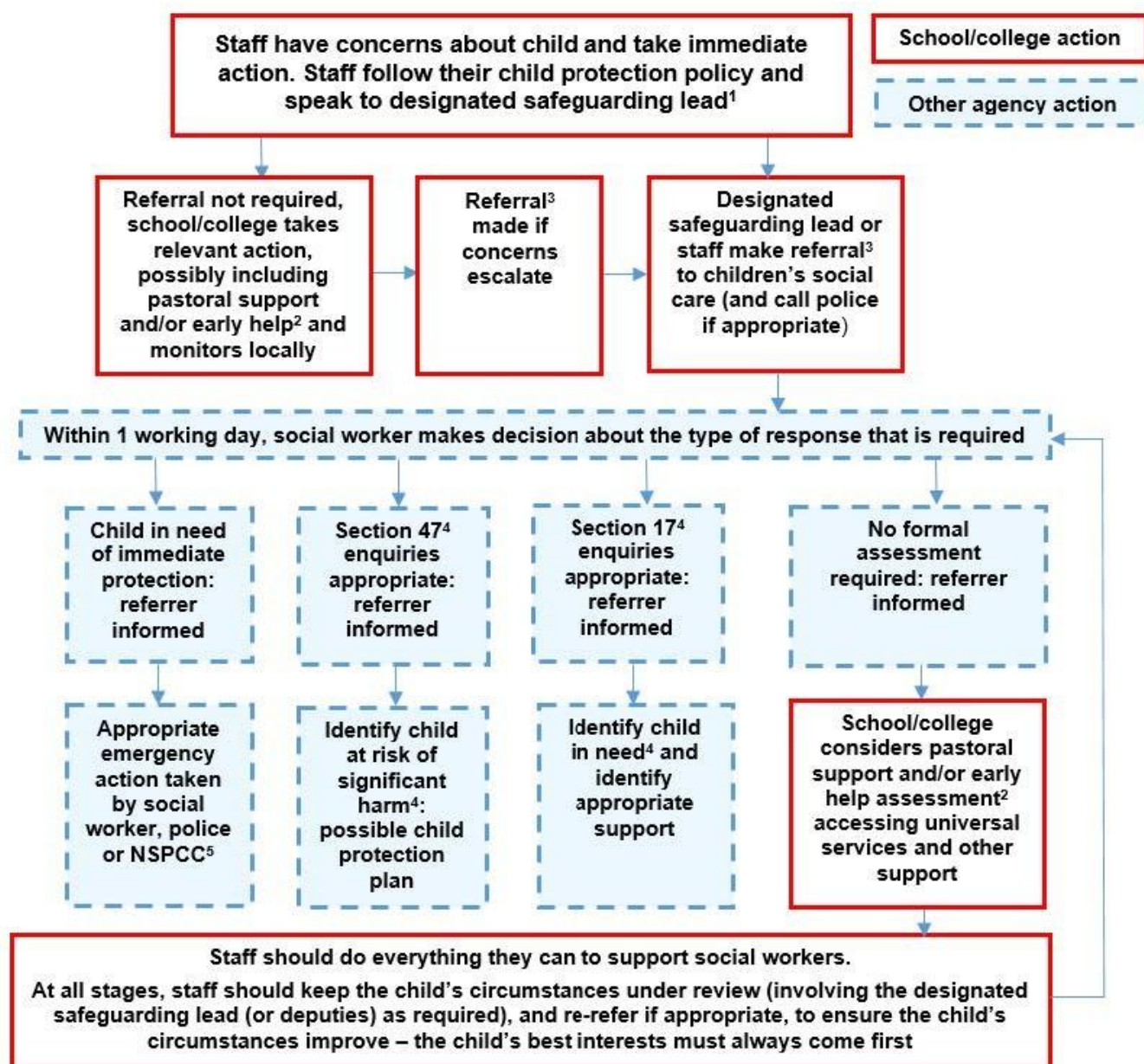


2. Purpose-limited & necessary.
3. Data minimisation.
4. Accuracy.
5. Timeliness & security.
6. Accountability & audit trail.
7. Share without consent where necessary to protect a child from harm.

A4. Referral flow chart

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1. In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
4. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).
5. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

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A5. Local referral links & key contacts (maintain locally and review termly)

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- **Derbyshire – Starting Point:** 01629 533190 (professionals' consultation 01629 535353).
- **Derby City – Initial Response Team:** 01332 641172; out of hours Careline 01332 956606.
- **Nottinghamshire – MASH/Children's Social Care:** 0300 500 80 80; out of hours 0300 456 4546.
- **Police:** 999 (emergency) / 101 (non-emergency).
- **LADO:** local contact per LA website.

Child referral form to Children's Social Care Derby City -

https://myaccount.derby.gov.uk/en/service/report_concerns_about_a_child

Derbyshire Police

- If you believe that a child or an adult is at immediate risk of harm and in need of protection then you should call the Police - 999, straight away.
- Alternatively, if you want advice from the Police and the child or adult is not in immediate need of protection, you can call the Police on the telephone number 101.

Children's Social Care in Derby and Derbyshire

- If you are a practitioner and wish to talk to a Social Worker about ways to engage children and families in early help and/or whether thresholds for Social Care or Early Help have been met, please ring the area where the child lives:
 - In Derbyshire - Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353. The service operates Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm.
 - In Derby City - Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329. The service operates Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and [online referral](#).
 - Urgent referrals via Initial Response Team during normal working days between 9 am and 5 pm on 01332 641172. At all other times concerns can be discussed with Careline who can be contacted on 01332 956606. Remember: all telephone referrals should be followed up within 48 hours using the [Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral System](#).
 - Non-urgent concerns should be submitted via the [Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral System](#). Online referrals will only be checked during normal working days between 9am and 5pm, only urgent referrals made via 01332 956606 will be responded to out of hours, on weekends and bank holidays.
- If you are concerned about a child's welfare or worried, they are being abused, you should make a referral to Children's Social Care in the area where the child lives - Please do not keep your worries to yourself.

[The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) set out in detail how concerns about the welfare of children are looked into and gives information about local contacts, including where staff can get further advice and information. More information is available on the page.

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused is national guidance for practitioners that sets](#) out the main steps to take to safeguard children.

Think Family

- You may also be concerned about the welfare of an adult living in the same home.
- If you are the victim of abuse, or you think you know someone who is being or has been abused, it is really important to get help and advice or make a referral:
 - In Derbyshire this should be via Call Derbyshire 01629 533190 between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and between 9.30am and 4pm on Saturdays. Outside these times contact the out of hours service 01629 532600.

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- In Derby City contact Adults, Health, and Housing, during normal working days between 9 am and 5 pm on 01332 640777. At all other times concerns can be discussed with Careline who can be contacted on 01332 956606.
- More information about safeguarding adults at risk can be found on the [Derby Safeguarding Adult Board website](#) or [Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board website](#).

Local safeguarding information: Nottingham/Nottinghamshire

- If you are concerned about a child contact Children's Social Care tel: 0300 500 80 80
- In an emergency outside of office hours please call our emergency duty team on tel: 0300 456 4546
- If you work for Nottinghamshire County Council or one of our partner agencies see the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) page
- In an emergency dial 999, if less urgent phone 101. Or visit:
- If you are concerned about someone who works with children, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via 0115 977 3921.
- If you are not sure whether a child is being abused you can discuss the circumstances with us or with someone else who works with children, such as a teacher, health visitor or the NSPCC. All professionals who work with children have a responsibility to safeguard them and will know how to help.

Neighboring Authorities Access Points

These are the links to contact details for safeguarding and Early Help for the local authority services neighbouring Derby/Shire and Nottingham/Shire

- **Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding:** <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/report-concern>
- **Leicestershire County Council Safeguarding:** <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>
- **Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council** <https://dscp.org.uk/report-concern>
- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Safeguarding:** <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/child-protection>

A6. Safeguarding report form (internal)

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Name of child:	Date of Birth:
Date of concern:	Time of concern:
Concern identified by:	Role/Position:
Name of alleged person(s) responsible for the harm:	How is this person known to the victim:
Witnesses:	Place of incident:

Concern/Incident/Disclosure:
(Why are you concerned about this child? What have you observed, when? What have you been told and when? Please provide a description of any incidents or anything you have been told by a child or another person. Remember to make clear what is fact and what is hearsay/opinion. Note the language/terminology used by the child, or adult, and be clear about who has said what.)

Has any action been taken in relations to this concern:
(This could be action taken by yourself or anybody else including other agencies, parents etc)

Any relevant historic information that will be considered:
(Include any known agencies involved relevant to the disclosure/concern. Include any information that may guide decision making i.e., is the child on the CP register, are they known to the CSE strategy, previous allegations made, and any other relevant information known to adds to this concern).

This section completed by:	Date & Time:
Concern passed to/discussed with:	Date & Time:

Was there a delay in passing on the concern:	YES / NO
If yes, please comment on the reasons for the delay:	

Action to be taken/recommendations from DSP:	
Who did you report this incident to DSP, Asst DSP?	What time was this reported?

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(Highlight here the recommended actions to be taken) •	Actions completed – please evidence. •
Signed:	Dated:

FOR COMPLETION BY (ASST) DSL ONLY

Have all requested actions been completed	YES/NO
Any action taken by the DSL:	
Has this been fed back to referrer	YES/NO
Signed by (ASST)DSL - (involved in the incident) SIGNATURE: PRINT NAME:	Signed by MANAGER or (ASST)DSL – (Clarification) SIGNATURE: PRINT NAME:

A7. Allegations against adults – LADO route

- Same-day notification to Manager/DSL

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- LADO consultation within **1 working day**
- Follow LADO advice
- Strategy meeting as required
- Parallel HR processes
- DBS referral if threshold met.

A8. Safety Contract & Emergency Details (parents/guardians on site)

- Prior notice & purpose of visit

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- Supervision requirement
- No unsupervised contact with other children
- No photography/recording
- Follow staff instructions
- Health & safety brief
- Emergency contact details
- Agreement to site rules and confidentiality.

This form is for carers who are staying on site to support a client. This information will be kept confidentially and is to ensure the safety of everyone on site. We will only use this information in case of emergency.

Name:	
Address:	
Tel No:	
Relationship to client:	

Emergency contact: in the case of an emergency please provide contact details below:

Name:	
Relationship you:	
Contact details:	

Whilst you are on site, our priority will be the session participant. We will endeavour to monitor and support your safety and ask you to step back where possible to allow us to focus on supporting the participant.

SAFETY ASPECTS OF ANIMAL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The information below is intended to help you manage your safety whilst on site.

SECTION A. Protective Attire

- I understand that I should always wear hard-soled, fully enclosed shoes or boots and socks to protect feet, and long trousers to protect legs while working around or interacting with horses.
- I understand that I should also have appropriate weatherproof clothing.
- I understand that I must provide my own protective equipment if possible and that Pony Partnerships can provide some equipment with prior notice.

Section B. The Nature and Physical Character of the Horse

- I am advised that horses/equines are unpredictable by nature, with minds of their own, as are all animals both domestic and wild. They can be very responsive to your energy so be aware of how you are feeling.
- I am advised that when a horse/equine is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is their instinct to move away from danger or towards safety. We will support you with your awareness of the

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space and ensuring your own safety.

- I am advised that a horse/equine might not be able to see me if I am behind them - we will support you to understand where they can see you and help you be aware of and manage your distance from them.
- I am advised that I must always approach a horse/equine calmly and quietly with caution, preferably to their shoulder or lower neck.
- I am advised that loud and/or sudden unexpected movements, such as dropping an object near a horse/equine, can provoke them to react according to natural, protective instincts as described above.
- I am advised that the first signs of anger or fear in a horse/equine are the sudden tensing of the muscles of the body, possibly laying the ears flat back against the head, or quickly tossing or raising the head. I understand that the staff will manage any of these signs should they be evident.
- I am advised that a horse/equine can see independently with each eye, actually looking in one direction with one eye and another direction with the other eye. They can also focus both eyes on one object somewhere in front of them. Typically, the direction in which the ear is pointing will tell an observer where the eye is looking on the same side and to what they are listening.
- I am advised that a horse/equine has two blind areas around which they cannot see. Those areas are directly behind and directly in front. When they have their head lowered to the ground, the spot directly at the end of the nostrils is a blind area. This is the reason it is best to approach close to the shoulder, and never to surprise from the rear, or to reach first for their mouth or muzzle area.
- I am advised that while a horse/equine is very sure-footed by nature, they may accidentally step on an object such as a human's foot when they are balancing or turning around. We will support you to manage your distance from the horse/equine and can provide protective footwear if required.

I have read and understand the above concerning protective attire and the nature and physical character of the horse.

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	

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