



Administrative Office*11211 Katy Freeway, Suite 660*Houston, TX 77079

281-356-7588*Fax 281-888-5269

SIRE Fort Bend at RSSLC * 2100 Preston Street * Richmond, TX 77469

SIRE Hockley * 24161 Spring Dr. * Hockley, TX 77447

SIRE Spring * 4610 Sloangate * Spring, TX 77373

SIRE is a Premier Accredited Center through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH INTL)

Rider Handbook

Thank you so much for your interest in SIRE's Therapeutic Horsemanship Program. SIRE is a PATH International Premier Accredited Center that has been providing therapeutic programs to individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and learning disabilities in the Houston area since 1983. SIRE has three locations: Hockley, Spring and Fort Bend County (Richmond).

Lessons are conducted Tuesday - Saturday mornings, afternoons, and evenings. The SIRE lesson schedule follows the school year calendar, with class starting in September and ending in May. Anyone enrolling in the program after the beginning of class in September will have their tuition fee prorated for the remainder of the year. Summer is considered a separate semester and is billed for separately. Tuition fees vary by the day of the week according to the total number of lessons offered on that day. Our Rider Relations Manager will provide you with the most up to date calendar and fee schedule.

To enroll as a new rider in SIRE's program, please take the following steps:

- Carefully read all of the attached information.
- Complete the attached registration form, release and consent forms.
- Request your physician to complete and return the Rider Medical History and Physicians Statement Form prior to your assessment.
- Mail, fax, or deliver the completed forms to SIRE's administrative office. After processing your application, we will contact you to schedule an appointment for an assessment. The assessment will take up to 1 hour and is conducted at the SIRE location where you will be participating. Following the assessment you will be placed in a class, if a suitable opening is available, or placed on a waiting list for an appropriate opening.
- A one-time \$120.00 Assessment Fee is due at the time of the assessment, or may be sent in with the completed registration forms.**

Volunteers

SIRE volunteers are the lifeblood of our program. If you know of someone who is a minimum age of 14 years old and may be interested in volunteering, please direct them to our website for further information:

www.sirehouston.org

All of us at SIRE are looking forward to having you as part of our SIRE family.

Yours truly,

Joe Wappelhorst
Executive Director

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SIRE is staffed with PATH Certified instructors who evaluate the needs and abilities of each rider. The PATH Certified instructors develop and follow lesson plans designed to benefit the riders with whom they work. The horse leaders and side walkers volunteer their time to insure the safety of the riders.

Therapeutic Riding:

Therapeutic Riding lessons are equestrian skill based lessons for people with disabilities. The focus of the lessons is skill development and progression while improving the rider's physical, cognitive, emotional, sensory and/or social skills. Taught by a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and assisted by volunteer aids, helping the rider reach their full potential is of paramount importance. Often times the riders participate in pre-mounted and post-mounted horse care. Riders who have physical, intellectual, cognitive, developmental, sensory, and/or learning differences will benefit from Therapeutic Riding.

Based on individual needs, the goals of the program are for the rider to improve his or her:

Muscle Tone	Sensory Awareness	Confidence
Muscle Strength	Spatial Organization	Empathy
Balance	Social Skills	Pride
Rhythm	Sequencing	Attention Span
Coordination	Judgment	Flexibility
Range of Motion	Reasoning	Patience

AND develop some of the following horsemanship skills:

Reining	Horse handling	Posting Trot
Transitions	Ground skills	Ground Poles
Sitting Trot	Stable Management	Cantering
Arena figures	Lateral movements	Horse husbandry
Trail obstacles	Two point position	

Classes are 45- 60 minutes long depending on size and age of riders. Classes have a maximum of 4 riders per class. Group classes are beneficial due to the opportunity to interact with other riders and families. The riders can also learn from the other students in the class and enjoy group activities. All riders new to SIRE and therapeutic riding are strongly encouraged to register for group lessons. Riders are scheduled by age, skill level and availability.

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Equine Assisted Therapy (also known as Hippotherapy)*:

This program is under revision and currently unavailable. Equine assisted Therapy (also known as Hippotherapy) is a form of therapy that uses the movement of the horse as a means to achieve therapy goals. The horse's movement promotes active responses in the rider and facilitates activation of postural control, balance, motor and sensory systems. The treatments are conducted by licensed Physical, Occupational or Speech therapists and assisted by a certified riding instructor and volunteer aids. Although the focus is not on horsemanship skill development, the rider develops balance and feel of the horse and often times will participate in therapeutic riding as well.

**A physician's prescription for physical therapy and/or occupational therapy is required.*

Riders who have movement, speech and/or motor deficits can benefit from Equine Assisted Therapy. Some of the issues that may be addressed in a session are:

- Abnormal Muscle tone
- Impaired Balance
- Abnormal Reflexes
- Decreased Coordination
- Postural Asymmetry
- Decreased trunk mobility
- Abnormal limb function
- Impaired Sensorimotor function

SIRE's Competition Program:

SIRE offers the opportunity for riders to compete in horse shows, should they desire. Currently the competitions that SIRE participates in include:

The Top Hands Horse Show
Special Olympics Area and State Games
SIRE's All-Site Horse Show

Benefits of competition include:

- Skill Development
- Validates Progress
- Competitive nature enhances quality of home program
- "Real World" Experience
- Teaches winning and less than winning
- Teamwork
- Instills perseverance
- Develops discipline and training principles
- Pride in accomplishment
- Opportunities to learn to deal with adversity.
- Develops Horse mastership
- Increases flexibility
- Fun!

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SIRE RIDER ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

SIRE's Therapeutic Horsemanship programs are based on an individual's ability to participate safely and effectively and in compliance with our industry standards. Enrollment is offered when the necessary resources are available including: an appropriate horse, available volunteers, and class compatibility that meet the individual's needs.

Age: Riders are at least 3 years of age. There is no maximum age limit.

Weight: Maximum Weight: **200** pounds *

Postural Control: Riders over 80 pounds must be able to maintain a sitting position; by holding on with at least one hand.

Precautions and Contraindications:

The following conditions, if present, may represent precautions or contraindications to therapeutic horseback riding. Please review this information, and if present, contact SIRE for more information.

ORTHOPEDIC

Atlantoaxial Instability
Coxa Arthritis
Cranial Deficits
Osteoporosis
Heterotopic Ossification/Myositis
Joint subluxation/dislocations

OTHER

Indwelling Catheters
Skin Breakdown
Weight exceeds 200 pounds

MEDICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

Animal Abuse
Physical/Sexual/Emotional Abuse
Dangerous to self or others
Exacerbation's of medical conditions
Fire Settings
Heart Conditions
Medical Instability
PVD
Respiratory Compromise
Thought Control Disorders Respiratory Compromise
Recent Surgeries
Substance Abuse
Thought Control Disorders

NEUROLOGIC

Pathologic Fractures
Spinal Instability/Abnormalities
Seizure Disorder
Hemophilia
Spina Bifida/Chiari II malformation
Tethered Cord/Hydromyelia
Hydrocephalus/Shunt

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RIDER GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Tuition & Fees:

SIRE follows a typical school year calendar, with lessons beginning the first week of September and ending the last week of May or the first week of June. The summer semester is separate and is charged separately.

The actual cost for one year of riding lessons (fall and spring semesters) is over \$5,200 per rider, but thanks to our generous donors we are able to charge less than half this amount.

Tuition rates vary because some days of the week have fewer meetings due to holidays, horse shows and other special events.

The tuition break down by day of the week for one year (fall and spring semesters) is:

Tuesday	\$2,000
Wednesday	\$2,000
Thursday	\$2,000
Friday	\$1,800
Saturday	\$1,650

Please Note – We have factored in 4 missed lessons due to weather related cancellations per year. If fewer weeks are missed that is considered a bonus for our riders and no additional fee will be assessed.

The tuition for our summer semester is separate from above and based on weeks available.

Because our tuition fee is less than half of our actual operating expense per lesson we do not offer credits or make ups for missed lessons.

Fees may be paid in the following options:

- 1 full payment due on or before August 31st – 5% discount applied
- 2 equal payments due on or before August 31 and January 31st – 2.5% discount applied
- 10 monthly payments August through May

Fees are due before or on the last day of each month. Payments not received by due date are subject to a late payment fee of \$25.

The summer semester requires separate registration and payment.

Payment is due before services are provided. Please arrange a payment method before your first lesson.

Please Note – Non-payment of fees will result in suspension from the program until the account is made current.

Payment methods include:

- Credit card (available on our website)
- Automatic bank withdrawal
- Check by mail or tuition drop box at each site



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If you would like to request financial aid, please contact the Administrative Assistant/Rider Relations: kelly@sire-htec.org; or phone 281-356-7588 ext. 204. Financial Aid is limited and awarded annually; you must apply each year.

Your lesson time is guaranteed upon enrollment. We require a three week notice of withdrawal (medical emergencies excepted).

Should you have any questions please contact Administrative Assistant/Rider Relations at kelly@sire-htec.org, or by phone; 281-356-7588 ext. 204.

Forms:

To be in compliance with our PATH Accreditation Standards, registration forms must be renewed annually by all riders actively participating in the SIRE program.

Attendance:

To gain maximum benefit from SIRE it is imperative that riders attend as many lessons as possible. A rider's enrollment in the SIRE program reserves a place for him/her which otherwise could serve another rider. When a scheduled rider does not show up for their lesson, volunteers assigned to work with that rider may become discouraged and perhaps drop out. This jeopardizes SIRE's program. We do understand that illnesses, work, traffic and other situations arise and ask that if you or your rider must miss class, please contact your SIRE site so we can avoid having the horse tacked up unnecessarily. A 24 hour notice of an absence is most helpful.

Medical Leave: Medical leave can be requested if three or more lessons are missed for health related reasons. Your account will be credited for these lessons. SIRE cannot guarantee your lesson time will remain open. If you wish to reserve your lesson time, 50% of the tuition fee will be assessed.

For absences please call:

Hockley 281-356-7588 Ext. 1 Spring 281-356-7588 Ext. 252 Fort Bend 281-344-4308

Punctuality:

It is extremely important for a rider to arrive approximately 10 minutes prior to the scheduled riding time. If a rider is late, SIRE cannot guarantee he/she will be able to ride. **Once the lesson has begun, the instructor may not be able to leave the other riders unattended to mount late arriving students.**

No Shows:

Riders having three no show/no notification occurrences within a semester will be notified that they are being dropped from the program.

Lesson Cancellation Due to Bad Weather:

Since we have covered arenas at all three sites, weather cancellations will be unusual. If road conditions are unsafe SIRE will make the determination to cancel class **usually no earlier than two hours prior to class.**

To determine cancellation, it is the rider's responsibility to call the appropriate SIRE Office.

Hockley 281-356-7588, Press 311 Spring 281-356-7588, Press 312 Fort Bend 281-344-4308



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Clothing for Riders:

Appropriate clothes for riding:

- Long pants and hard soled boots with a low heel. Since we use safety stirrups on all of the English and most of the western saddles, sneakers are permissible but not desirable. Dress for comfort and according to the weather.
- Undergarments that provide adequate support and comfort are necessary.
- Wear close-fitting clothing for safety as well as comfort. Loose or baggy clothing can get caught and tangled in equipment.
- No dangling jewelry is permitted.
- All riders are required to wear an ASTM/SEI approved Equestrian Helmet. If you do not have your own helmet, SIRE will provide you with one. Should you choose to purchase your own, a list of tack shops that carry approved helmets is included in this packet.
- Sunscreen, gloves, and jacket, as needed.

Parking:

The parking area is marked at all sites. At the **Hockley Site**: please avoid parking in front of the pasture gates.

Siblings:

If siblings are in attendance with parents of riders participating in class, **parents are responsible for the supervision of these children *at all times*.** Noise and activity can distract from the lesson and compromise the safety of our riders. Distractions reduce the benefit the rider receives from riding.

Pets:

No personal pets are allowed on the SIRE premises. Your instructor must approve guide dogs or other assistive animals.

Conduct at the Site:

It is mandatory that everyone comply with all posted safety rules. Smoking or the use of drugs or alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden. No mistreatment, abuse, or verbal suggestions of abuse of any animal or person will be tolerated. We reserve the right to ask anyone to leave the premises.

Recommended Tack Shop for Riding Clothes:

Charlottes Saddlery:

Tomball

114 West Main

Tomball, Texas 77375

281.351.1705

Our Tomball location is located immediately on the west side of the railroad tracks on Main street (also known as FM 2920) at the east end of town.



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Possible Reasons for Rider Discharge

Please be advised of the following reasons that may lead to discharge from the riding program.

- The rider's inability to maintain head and neck control while riding.
- The rider's inability to maintain sitting balance while riding.
- The rider exceeds a weight that can safely be managed by staff, volunteers, and/or horses.
- Uncontrolled and/or inappropriate behavior that constitutes a safety risk to rider, volunteers, staff and/or horse.
- Any change in the rider's medical, physical, cognitive, or emotional condition that makes therapeutic riding unsafe for the rider, staff, volunteers and/or horse.
- Three scheduled appointments are missed without prior cancelation.
- Nonpayment of fees.

Our primary goal is for everyone at SIRE to have a fun, safe, successful and productive experience.

Thank you for joining us!

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