



Horse Welfare Policy

Applies from: October 2023 – October 2025

Signed of by Directors: 23rd October 2023

Principle: Spirit Project and Horse Spirit Project CIC is committed to an approach to the horse welfare that subscribes to the principles outlined in *The Compassionate Equestrian*, by Schoen and Gordon (2015), and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 'Five Freedoms' principles. These principles are reproduced below.

Purpose: Spirit Project and Horse Spirit Project (HSP) aims to ensure that all Horses are respected, treated with care and compassion and their emotional and physical needs are addressed promptly.

Applies to: Staff, Directors and volunteers.

**Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy at Spirit Project and Horse Spirit Project cic
is a non-riding therapeutic experience.**

The Compassionate Equestrian Principles

1. We recognize the sentience (ability to feel pain/pleasure) of horses, as well as all beings. We acknowledge that the horse is a willing, thinking, living being with most of the identical emotion-creating molecules found in human beings. We recognize that the horse has bones, muscles, nerves, and organs, as does a human, and that these structures are just as susceptible to injury, damage, and disease as those of people.
2. We treat animals as we wish to be treated ourselves, with respect and compassion, to the best of our abilities.
3. Compassionate Equitation is based on an underlying foundation of respect, compassion, and loving-kindness.
4. Compassionate Equitation is based on the latest in neuroscience and equitation science, and the benefits of a compassionate brain and heart for all interactions.
5. We make time for self-reflection and reevaluation of various areas of horsemanship. Do our choices meet basic humane standards of respect for all life?
6. We take a few moments of silence to become heart-centered, allowing for the release of any destructive emotions, prior to working with any horse in any way. This allows both the individual and the horse to interact from a place of inner calm, peace, awareness, and mindfulness, thereby allowing for the most positive, constructive outcome from all interactions between humans and horses.
7. Compassionate Equitation accelerates the evolution of joy, respect, and gratitude between humans and horses, and allows for a more expansive, conscious interaction between humans and equine companions.

8. We acknowledge that a peaceful, quiet environment is of benefit. Research suggests that classical and country music are conducive to a peaceful environment for animals.
9. We agree to act with patience, kindness, and consistency, avoiding any intentionally harmful, aggressive, violent behaviours, including actions out of anger or egoic self-interest.
10. We allow for the creation of new, more respectful, humane, and considerate approaches to horsemanship and all training methods.
11. We acknowledge that common sense is a component of compassion. We agree that our hearts be open to the bigger picture of how the horse industry has evolved, and how it will evolve into the future, as kindness, tolerance, and forgiveness are restored to all aspects of the equestrian world.
12. We are committed to educating everyone involved with horses in the understanding of how pain and discomfort are expressed by a horse.
13. We recognize that horses may exhibit subtle behavioural signs of discomfort and pain. These signs could indicate the early onset of potential lameness and lead to chronic, serious problems. We agree to increase our mindfulness, awareness, and understanding of such subtle signals conveyed to us by the horse's silent language.
14. We acknowledge that all beings deserve to live in a holistic, balanced, healthy environment. This is imperative to preventative health care, both physically and mentally, of humans and horses, and includes the creation of barns and environments free of toxic compounds.
15. We embrace a holistic, integrative approach to equine health care, merging the best of conventional and complementary approaches that help horses heal, and relieve their pain and suffering as quickly as possible.
16. We offer the most natural food sources and supplements available.
17. We acknowledge neurobiology and quantum physics as a foundation for interspecies communication, the Transspecies Field Theory, and the Compassionate Field Theory.
18. We acknowledge that compassion is the common foundation shared in the world of equestrian activities. Grounded in individual responsibility, respect, loving-kindness, and a true willingness to alleviate another's suffering, compassion is the unifying force that transcends all labels, beyond breeds, discipline, health care, and medications. The essential question is, "What is the most compassionate choice for our horses and all involved, in this moment?"
19. We embrace compassionate rehabilitative programs. A cradle-to-cradle equestrian model ensures a humane life from birth to death for all horses.
20. We choose to restore compassion to the centre of all equine-based facilities, horse training techniques, and equestrian sports, and to clearly understand and acknowledge the difference between what constitutes kindness to horses and what does not. We cultivate responsible compassion toward all horses, including those deemed feral, unwanted, "homeless," aged, or unrideable for any reason.

21. We allow for an authentic bond based on compassionate care to form between horses and humans, leading us into a new paradigm of training and understanding that brings our worldwide community of horse lovers together with peace, awakened compassion, and loving-kindness for the good of all.
22. We recognize the importance of applying a life-cycle assessment and sustainability model to the equestrian industry.
23. We acknowledge the importance of healing “old wounds” as an integral foundation of heart-centred horsemanship. Healing old wounds allows us to be the absolute best human beings we can be. Removing these harmful “filters” allows us to see the world with clearer vision, unobscured by destructive patterns and emotions.
24. We acknowledge that by the acceptance and practice of the 25 Principles of Compassionate Equitation, we are on the path to becoming compassionate global citizens and extending the message of The Compassionate Equestrian to the entire world.
25. We acknowledge that forgiveness is a key to healing emotional and psychological wounds, and pain and suffering within ourselves. We recognize the importance of forgiving ourselves, as well as forgiving all others—horses and humans—as a foundation for improving health and happiness. We commit to working on forgiveness within ourselves for the benefit of all beings.

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Our welfare responsibilities

We are committed to the Animal Welfare Act 2006 ‘Five Freedoms’:

1. Freedom from hunger/thirst
2. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
3. Freedom to show natural behaviour
4. Freedom from discomfort
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

We demonstrate our commitment to equine welfare through the provision of:

- All horses have access to dry areas and are free to roam.
- Horses have access to all round feed with hay/pasture.
- We closely work with Green Veterinary Practice for all their physical needs and medications
<https://www.greenvets.co.uk/home.html>
- We closely work with a Farrier. Horses have regular trimming with
<https://www.facebook.com/ZWFARRIER/>
- All horses will have access to various feeding regimes depending on the time of the year. To prevent major illnesses such as Colic, Laminitis and EMS, feeding regimes will take into consideration any particular needs.
- Their weight is closely monitored, and appropriate feeding regime implemented.
- Horses are regularly checked and regularly wormed.
- Their environment is maintained and cleaned on a regular basis. Shelters are cleaned once or twice a day; fresh water is constantly available, and all containers are cleaned regularly.

- The field is regularly cleaned, and poo picking is carried out once or twice a day. Manure is removed from the field on a regular basis (minimum once a year). Droppings are regularly checked to indicate any illness or worming needs.
- Hay nets are regularly checked for damage and replaced when needed.
- Horses are daily checked for any illness. Behaviour and external signs are monitored for any changes and the Vet is called asap.
- All horses are microchipped and hold a passport.
- All new horses are introduced slowly and with care, to avoid stress and distress. To prevent diseases the horses are kept separated and assessed.
- Horses who are infirm through old age, low-fat score, illness, or lameness will not take part in any activities.
- Horses which are felt to be a danger to clients or other horses, will not participate in any activities.
- Horses are free to choose whether they wish to work with clients or not. Their choices will be respected.
- Everyone involved understands what constitutes good welfare and realises that it is much more than just ensuring that an animal is physically healthy.
- All clients will receive a Health and Safety introduction, including signing a Safety Contract. Clients will not be left on their own with the horses. A facilitator will always be present. If a client places a horse in danger or is abusive, we will reserve the right to withdraw the service.
- Horses working hours will be limited to:
 - **One-to-one sessions** - clients will be offered 1.5 hours sessions. These sessions will be a mixture of talking therapy, client activities on their own, some horse contact and breaks.

Horses will be free to choose whether they wish to work with the client or not and their choices will be respected.

There will be no more than two one-to-one sessions per day.

- **Group sessions** – sessions will last around 5.5 or 6 hours. These sessions will be a mixture of talking therapy, group activities, tea breaks, lunch break and some horse contact.

Horses will be free to choose whether they wish to work or not and their choices will be respected.