Horse riding and equestrian

The planning considerations that are common to all curriculum activities can be found in the [CARA generic template](). These must be considered as well as the activity-specific considerations outlined below.

Activity scope

This guideline relates to student participation in horse riding including equestrian[1] and trail riding[2] as a curriculum activity.

Horse riding may involve other activities that have various risk levels. Refer to the relevant activity guideline (e.g. [Light vehicles, towing and trailers]() guideline) for mandatory requirements associatied with these activities.

Note: This guideline does not cover activities involving rodeo, driving, vaulting, reining, riding for the disabled activites or working with stock animals (e.g. mustering, Western riding, team penning, cutting, roping) as part of a curriculum activity. A separate risk assessment should be undertaken (e.g. using the [Stockyards]() guideline or the [CARA generic template]()) for these activities.

Mandatory requirements

Mandatory requirements must be met for the activity to be conducted.

- Use the [Code of Practice for the Horse Industry 2009]() and [Safe Work Australia - guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses]() when planning this activity.
- Use the [Queensland Adventure Activity Standards](), [Animal Use in Queensland State Schools]() and [Animal welfare legislation]() when planning this activity.
- Refer to the [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries]() website or [Equestrian Queensland]() for duty of animal care information and whether approvals or permits are required for the activity (e.g. [Horse registration and movement records]() when appropriate).
- Follow the [Animal observation and handling]() guidelines.
- Obtain parent/carer consent and a medical questionnaire/declaration for high risk activities. (Note: Students with a medical condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner prior to participation in the activity).
- Obtain relevent [permits]() for access to trails.
- Establish and implement procedures for emergencies such as injury (e.g. laceration, fractures) and first aid, resuscitation, communication, emergency service contact details and supervision/safety detail of students that are appropriate to the horse riding activity, location and conditions.
- Establish and implement safety procedures. This must include, but is not limited to, the procedures outlined in the Workplace health and Safety Queensland [Horse riding schools, trail riding establishments and horse riding establishments Code of Practice 2002]().
- Induct students on procedures for emergency (e.g. separation from the group), safety procedures and correct technique.
- Follow the school's [sun safety strategy.]()
- Refer to the [School Excursions and International School Study Tours]() procedure for off site horse riding activities.

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[1] **Equestrian** riding includes dressage, jumping and cross country for training, skills development and competitions.

[2] **Trail riding** involves organised recreational horse back riding that can be short (an hour or two) or long (multi-day) rides. It may occur in diverse environments where the participants are led as a group outside of enclosed areas in the natural environment.

Little girl riding horse side view File #12722481 iStockphoto © Loretta Hostettler

Risk level

High risk: Horse riding undertaken at a recognised riding school with hired horses and equipment from a horse-hire service and/or with student-provided horse and equipment.

Supervision requirements

- Provide sufficient adult supervision to manage the activity safely, including emergency situations (refer to the Code of Practice for the Horse Industry 2009 p.17 and the Safe Work Australia Guide to Managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses). Consider age, size, ability and maturity of students in this decision. Principals make decisions about the supervision requirements.
- Students less than 10 years old must be led one rider at a time on a lead rope held by a qualified adult supervisor (either riding a horse or on foot). This adult supervisor cannot be included in the normal ratios for the supervision of the ride.
- Ensure adult supervisors are visible and easily identified and all students are in sight of at least one adult supervisor at all times.
- All adult supervisors, who are not registered teachers, must comply with The Working with Children (Risk Management & Screening) Act 2000 (Qld).

Qualifications for supervisors

- A registered teacher with a qualification in Horse Riding Instruction from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or Equestrian Australia Coach. If these qualifications are unattainable, the registered teacher must demonstrate competence (knowledge and skills) in implementing the Safe Work Australia Guide and have experience in horse riding instruction to an adequate standard.
  OR
- An adult supervisor, other than a teacher, with a statement of attainment from a RTO, either:
  - SISSS00061 Horse Riding Instructor;
  - SISSS00106 Trail Guide - Day Rides;
  - Equestrian Australia Coach; or
  - equivalent courses/qualification, working under established safety procedures in the Safe Work Australia Guide and working under the direct supervision of a registered teacher.
  OR
- For overnight rides, an adult supervisor with a statement of attainment from an RTO in SISSS00107 Trail Guide – Overnight Rides (or equivalent) working under established safety procedures in the Safe Work Australia Guide and working under the direct supervision of a registered teacher.

Requirements for equipment/facilities

- All horses must be inspected by an adult supervisor before commencing the activity. The adult supervisor must be satisfied the horse complies with Safe Work Australia - guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses (Fit for purpose horse).
- All tack being used must be inspected by each rider to ensure it is properly maintained and safe to use (e.g. no cracks, splits or worn stitching on saddles/bridles, appropriate sized stirrup irons). Adult supervisors make final decisions on the safety of tack.
- Readily available first aid equipment and consumable items (e.g. heat pack, ice pack) appropriate to the location and level of risk.
- Unobstructed access to the site for emergency vehicles.
- Separate, designated areas for spectators and horses.
- Wear personal protective equipment including full-length trousers, sleeved shirts and appropriate riding footware that stops the foot sliding forward through the stirrup iron and to allows easy removal in case of emergency (e.g. closed-toe shoes with a solid raised heel).
- All equipment (e.g. helmets, footwear) must comply with the current Australian Standard (or an equivalent American, British or European standard) and be properly secured and fitted.

Hazards and controls
Before the activity

Hazards	Control measures
Considering environmental conditions	• Assess weather ([Bureau of Meteorology](#)) and trail conditions. • Follow appropriate [hand washing procedures](#) after working in and around animal environments and after handling animals. • Ensure environments are suited to the experience of all riders, (e.g. arena riding surface is level and well drained and trail riding terrain is suitable).
Accessing facilities and using equipment	• Ensure an adult supervisor accompanies students in horse enclosures. Limit the number of students in the enclosure at any one time. • Refer to the equipment requirements outlined in Equestrian Australia's [Discipline Rules and Regulations](#) specified for each horse riding discipline (e.g. [Dressage Equipment Annex](#) for dressage activities). • Consider the rider ability, resources, services and facilities when choosing a trail (e.g. campsites, drinking water, toilets and shelter from extreme weather).
Managing student considerations	• Designate supervisor position on ride roles (i.e. leader and drag rider) on trail rides to manage the activity safely (including emergency situations). • Check riders' ability to start, stop and turn a horse prior to trail ride departure. • Match the horse to rider ability and the task expected of it. • Supervise mounting and dismounting in a safe area. Horses must be untethered when mounting and dismounting. • Lead inexperienced riders on a lead rope by qualified supervisor, when trial riding. • Do not allow personal attributes or accessories (e.g. jewellery, body piercing, clothing, hair, fingernails) to interfere in the activity.

During the activity

Hazards	Control measures
Considering environmental conditions	• Avoid riding on roadways or other traffic areas. Obey road rules, keep left and only two riders riding side-by-side. • Cease activities when environmental conditions tend towards unfavourable (e.g. impending storm, extreme heat).
Accessing facilities and using equipment	• Conduct a girth check before mounting and again 15 minutes after mounting to ensure the saddle is not slipping.
Managing student considerations	• Match the riding pace to the skills of the least experienced rider and/or behaviour of horses. • Ensure safe distances are maintained between horses when riding. • Continuously monitor students and horses for signs of fatigue, illness, hunger, dehydration and slow progress during trail rides, to avoid situations becoming serious.

After the activity

Hazards	Control measures
Managing student considerations	• Ensure students dismount under supervision following an established protocol (e.g. at a safe distance of other horses, toward the inside of the area away from fences, not onto a free-standing mounting block).

Additional links

[Pony Club Queensland](#)

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