

Lessons: What to Expect

In an effort to ensure that everyone is familiar with the riding lesson routine, we have summarized the major points for you. If we've missed anything or more detail is required, please ask us 😊

Before you Ride:

Proper Attire:

All students must wear an ASTM approved helmet. While OOF does have a supply in the tack room, we encourage riders to purchase their own helmets to ensure proper fit. The only acceptable footwear is a boot or shoe with a small ½" + heel. Comfortable clothing is recommended. Layers are best during cooler weather.

As you progress you may wish to invest in additional equipment such as:

- ❖ Riding pants (breeches or jodhpurs)
- ❖ Half chaps (garters to prevent rubs or pinches to the inner calf from the stirrup leathers, and provide grip)
- ❖ Riding gloves (winter or summer depending on season)
- ❖ Your own crop and spurs
- ❖ Your own set of brushes

Preparing Your Mount:

Part of the riding lesson program includes preparing your horse or pony for your lessons. This means that you should plan to arrive at the farm 30 to 45 minutes before your scheduled lesson. A list will be posted on the bulletin board to indicate the horse / pony you will be riding in your lesson. Most of the school horses have their own labelled tack in the main tack room. You are expected to retrieve your animal from its paddock, groom him, put your tack on him, and be ready for the start of your lesson on time.

The Broom and the Shovel:

You are also expected to leave the barn clean. This means that if your horse should happen to provide a pile of manure (or urine), you are expected to clean it up before you proceed to the arena for your lesson. Manure and sweepings go to the manure pile or provided muck bucket or wheelbarrow. Shavings are spread on urine to soak it up and then the shavings are deposited in the manure pile or muck bucket.

After Your Lesson:

When you finish your lesson, it is your responsibility to return your tack to its proper place so that others can find it easily. Should the tack be soiled, it would be appreciated if you give it a wipe or spend some time, on occasion, cleaning the tack. If you are interested in learning how to keep your tack clean, please ask and we will show you how. It is important to keep the leather clean and flexible, but there are proper ways of doing so.

Turning out your Horse:

The needs of the animal come first. After your horse has been cooled out and brushed down, it is time to return him to the paddock or stall. Did he have a fly mask or blanket on when you brought him in? Make sure it is back on the horse when you put him outside again. Blankets also must be put on correctly, so ask for help if you are unsure of the proper way. Please note that it costs OOF between \$40 and \$200 to repair or replace a blanket when they are put on incorrectly. Horses must go into the correct paddocks. Some horses do not get along with others.

Before you leave:

Back Where It Went:

On returning to the stable area that you were using with your horse, you should check that the halter is hung on the hook and the lead rope is replaced. Tack and grooming supplies must be put away properly.

The Broom and Shovel Part II:

Did you sweep up your mess? Even if the only reminder that you used the area is the remnants from cleaning the horse's hooves, you will need to sweep the area. It's just like home! You have to clean up your mess. Take one last look around and make sure you have all your personal belongings before heading for home!

BYOG (Bring Your Own Groom):

While we do have helpers for beginner lessons who will help to bring horses in and teach kids how to tack up their ponies, we do not provide "grooms" to prepare your mount. If you wish this service provided you may inquire regarding availability and the extra cost associated with providing this service. If you do not follow these simple rules, you may be asked to pay an additional fee to have someone put your items away and clean up after you.

Administration:

The Paperwork:

Lesson payment is due at the first lesson of each session, unless you pay as you go. All riders/parents must complete a registration package and sign a release form before commencing to ride at Old Orchard Farm.

Cancellations:

When an instructor has to cancel a lesson due to a horse show or illness, it is our responsibility to create a new lesson, fit you into another lesson, or add the lesson to your next term.

When you must miss a lesson, we will *try* to find a lesson that you can join during that term to make it up. However, if the instructor was here, the horses were here, and you were not, we are under no obligation to reimburse you for that lesson or to add it to your next term.

Personal Property:

Please do not confuse boarders' property with the property of Old Orchard Farm School. Do not touch anything in the box lockers or on the front of the stalls. These items belong to the boarders. OOF is not responsible for lost or stolen property. We recommend that you do not leave your possessions unattended.

A midsized Rubbermaid bin is a great way to transport and store your belongings to and from lessons and will help you to keep all your belongings together and in one place while you are getting ready as well as keep them safe from being mistaken for others' while you are riding.