

Old Orchard Farm Social Media Guideline

Etiquette and Code of Conduct

Now that most of our riders are on social media we have found it necessary to put together an etiquette guideline/ code of conduct to help guide our young riders through the murky waters of social media. This guideline addresses what is and is not appropriate to post as it relates to the farm (and in general!) and how we expect our riders to conduct themselves online.

Our reasons for publishing this guideline are twofold: first we want to ensure that all social media interactions between our riders and with riders at other barns are positive; the second is that we are a business and it is important that we maintain an appropriate and professional social media image.

1. **Exercise the Golden Rule** - Be kind to one another! Personal comments about other riders on social media are not appropriate. This is a friendly barn – meanness or criticisms towards others of any kind will not be tolerated.
2. **Acting as an Ambassador** - If you use the Old Orchard Farm or OOF name or images of our farm in your account, posts or stories **you are volunteering yourself as an ambassador of the farm** and therefore should act as such online (and in person) with class, dignity and professionalism.
3. **Don't Overstep** - Be cautious of overstepping what is appropriate to post. Some things are only to be posted by Linda or approved OOF staff such as posting that a horse is for sale. Ask yourself if Linda would approve of the post before you share. This goes for sharing information about other riders as well – be sure that you are not posting anything you shouldn't be about others.
4. **Dubious Claims** – Be careful when posting online that you are not posting misinformation. Portraying yourself as an expert in any field will often open you up to criticism by others. It is best not post about things that you are not absolutely certain of. Be humble and remember that how you portray yourself online can follow you into the future and can reflect poorly on the farm.
5. **Damaging Opinions** – Please do not make negative or damaging statements about OOF horses or ponies on social media. Just because a horse or pony may be difficult on a given day or someone has had a bad ride or generally does not get along with a particular horse does not mean that the horse or pony is “bad”. Opinions posted on social media can become fact in the eyes of those who read them. Horses should not be given bad reputations based on a single person's opinion.
6. **Airing Dirty Laundry** - We all love a good fail pic and appreciate being able to laugh at our mistakes but please do not constantly post bad pictures/videos/comments on or of OOF horses. This can contribute to an undeserved bad reputation for the horse and for

the farm. The same goes if a horse has sustained an injury or illness – the reality of horses is that bad things do sometimes happen - but publishing it on social media is not a good idea, as things can be taken out of context and contribute to a poor image for all involved.

7. **Anonymous Question Apps** - Mention of Old Orchard Farm or OOF horses or other riders on anonymous question apps such as Sarahah, ASKfm or Realis are not appropriate. These sites are designed to give people a platform to make offensive, anonymous comments and are extremely unprofessional. Please do not post on these sites regarding Old Orchard Farm. If there is an issue, please discuss with the owners to come to a resolution.
8. **Ownership of Photos** – make sure that any photos you post are your own! If they are not, make sure you have permission to post them. Posting photographers' watermarked proofs that have not been paid for is not advised (or legal) but tagging yourself or friends in these photos is fine.
9. **When in Doubt Don't Post** - Remember everything you post online is public and cannot be undone. It doesn't matter whether or not you delete the post or message. If you've published it, it's traceable. When in doubt, leave it out.

Most of what we see posted day to day is lovely. We believe that our riders are kind and helpful people and we *love* to see people sharing their love for horses and watching their individual journeys towards better horsemanship. But please *think* before you post. Lasting damage can occur due to the turn of a phrase or one unthinking comment!

Keep in mind also that some barns do not allow any posting of any barn related content without prior approval of each post by the barn owner. We do not want to resort to this, so please think about how your content will reflect on the farm, yourself and your peers before you post! 😊