



## **Lesson Academy Curriculum**

**What Is Equitation? A good equitation rider is always in balance with the horse, maintains a correct position in every gait, movement, or over a fence, and possesses a commanding, but relaxed, presence, able to direct the horse with nearly invisible aids.**

*Children & Adults are accepted into the riding academy based on the following criteria:*

- *Students should be at least 7\* years (\*younger students will be accepted on a case by case basis) of age to ensure appropriate attention span, upper/lower body strength and overall safety of rider and school horse*
- *Students should be able to lift at least a 15 lb saddle (with assistance) and place it softly on a horse's back*
- *A minimum of 2 lessons per week are expected in order to assure repetition, muscle development and a continuous development & review of skills*
- *Riders must be willing and able to purchase necessary equipment and clothing in order to ride safely (see Appropriate Riding Attire)*
- *First come, first serve basis as we have limited space. Must have all tuition agreements, paperwork, & liability forms filed with SE Equestrian in order to be placed in a session.*

***Should a student miss an extended amount of lessons due to vacations, illness or injury, it may be necessary to repeat certain topics. Please note, this is a general guideline of what to expect during lessons and not an exact science. Consideration is given to a student's attention span, confidence level and overall fitness which can affect the time it takes to master the skills taught in a lesson. Both children & adults have vastly different learning styles. It is best to not draw comparisons as to avoid frustration. Please expect repetition and review often to ensure true mastery and safety standards are being met.***

**Beginner Lessons** (Less than 6 months of continuous instruction) Lessons will cover but not be limited to the following:

- Catching, releasing and leading of horses in a safe & effective manner
- Grooming, tacking and mounting procedures
- Barn & cross tie etiquette
- How to hold reins
- How to steer horse with reins
- How to stop horse with reins
- Balance in the saddle
- Walking around arena independently
- Trotting around arena independently
- Arena etiquette when sharing arena with others

- Navigating ground poles & obstacles
- Intro to posting & diagonals
- Strength building to aid with posting
- Balance building to aid with trotting & posting
- Intro to downward/upward transitions (trot to walk, walk to halt)
- 2 Point position
- Strength & confidence building for 2 point position
- Lunge work to enable strength, confidence and skill acquisition
- Sitting trot
- Beginnings of equine behavior & management (why horses do what they do)
- Intro to leg position & alignment
- Intro to hand position & alignment

**Novice Lessons** (At least 6 months of continuous instruction & have mastered above skills)

Novice lessons will cover but not be limited to the following skills:

- Proficiently catching, releasing, leading grooming & tacking up of horse independently
- Proficiently asking for upward transitions & identifying correct posting diagonal
- Proficiently & safely navigating horse around arena using correct aids
- Intro to warm up and cool down techniques
- Proficiently trotting over poles, cavalettis and beginning to navigate raised poles and cross rails.
- Proficiently navigating horse in both a full seat as well as a 2 point position
- Proficiently identifying & correcting posting diagonals
- Beginning to work on canter transitions and correct leads for horse balance
- Beginning to understand the connection of seat and leg
- Leg yields, lateral exercises & bending
- Can trot a horse down a line of ground poles straightly using legs and hands for straightness
- Can trot in and canter out of a line of one cross rail to a pole and hold a horse straight
- Can trot in and canter out of a line of cross rails
- What is a crest release & when to use it?
- Can successfully make a large and symmetrical circle in the trot
- Equine behavior & management (how to address a spook, buck, spin or any negative equine vice)
- Leg position and alignment
- Hand position and alignment
- Riding can ride without stirrups in the walk & trot for a full trip around the arena
- Intro to inside leg & outside rein
- Intro to equitation & its importance
- Intro to showing and how to behave at a show

**Intermediate Lessons** (1 year or more of continuous instruction & have mastered above skills)

Intermediate lessons will cover but not be limited to the following skills:

- Walk to canter transitions
- Appropriate warm-up & cool down techniques
- Continue working on bending a horse when appropriate
- How to counter bend a horse and when is it appropriate
- Identifying leads and how to set up a horse for correctness
- What is and how to execute a simple change of leads
- Maintaining straightness before and after a jump

- Trot to canter transitions
- Canter to trot/walk transitions
- Can canter a large circle in the arena
- How to maintain rhythm in the canter
- Continue working on crest releases and auto releases
- Canter on a line of poles seeking the correct distance
- Canter through a line of bounce poles
- Canter on a cross rail or multiple low jumps seeking the correct distance & leads
- Navigating a course of low jumps
- Intro to vertical jumps
- Navigating a line of gymnastic jump exercises
- Strategies for competitions & what does a judge look for in a rider?
- Riding without stirrups in the walk/trot/canter for a full trip around the arena
- Intro to jumping without stirrups
- Equitation & its importance
- Starting to understand a horse on the bit and off the forehand
- Intro to impulsion and why it is important
- The difference between impulsion & speed
- Inside leg to outside rein and why
- How to behave at a show – all eyes on you

**Advanced Lessons** (For riders who have had 3 or more years of continuous instruction, know how to walk, trot & canter correctly, can jump 2' or more in height, understand jumping distances, correct leads and lead changes, balance & rhythm, as well as jump course navigation, strides, turns and pace.)

Advanced lessons will cover but not be limited to:

- Balance and correct position over jumps
- Can put a horse on the bit and maintain for the duration of the ride
- Seeing distances more consistently
- Understanding strides between lines
- Understanding strides on roll backs and bending lines
- Adjusting a horse before & in between jumps
- Horse fitness & how it impacts their performance
- Jumping without stirrups around a full course of jumps
- Strategies for competition and what a judge looks for at a show
- Affecting your horse's adjustability in the walk/trot/canter
- Flying lead changes (if horse is capable)
- Feeling leads vs. looking for them
- Continue practicing walk to canter transitions
- Equitation over jumps
- Knowing when to use a crest or auto release
- Working on horse's impulsion and how to recognize it
- Working on getting a horse on the bit with his hind end engaged
- Can hold a counter canter on the long side of an arena