

Hunters Chase Farms Lesson Program Handbook & Family Agreement 2026–2027

Welcome to **Hunters Chase Farms**! As we begin our **38th year**, our mission remains the same—to provide a safe, positive, and encouraging environment where riders develop confidence, responsibility, sportsmanship, and lifelong horsemanship skills. At HCF, horseback riding is about much more than riding. We teach horse care, responsibility, teamwork, respect, and independence both on the ground and in the saddle.

Lesson Program

Lessons are approximately **2½ hours** and may include catching horses, grooming, tacking up and untacking, horse care, cleaning tack, arena riding, trail and field lessons, groundwork, games, horsemanship, stable management, and barn responsibilities. Not every lesson is mounted. Groundwork is an essential part of becoming a knowledgeable and confident rider.

Horse assignments are based on each rider's ability, confidence, and goals. Every horse has something valuable to teach. Lesson groups are also based on ability, confidence, horsemanship, and safety—not age or time in the program. Riders progress at different rates.

If a rider does not yet have the confidence or ability to safely participate in all lesson **drills** or objectives, the instructor may temporarily place them in a different group. This is **never a punishment**. It allows riders to build confidence without disrupting the lesson and return to their original group when ready. We will never ask a rider to do something they are not capable of doing. Please trust your instructor's decisions—they are made for the safety and long-term success of both the rider and the horses.

More information regarding rider levels and advancement will be provided as our rider level program continues to develop.

School Partnerships & Transportation

Hunters Chase Farms proudly offers a **TEA-approved Off-Campus Athletics (OCPE) Program** through participating school districts. Students riding **one or more lesson per week** may qualify for **PE credit**, and many riders attending **two or more lessons each week** may qualify for **Off-Campus Athletics**, allowing them to replace their final class period with horseback riding and, if approved by their school, leave school early for lessons. Early release helps families avoid afternoon traffic, arrive at lessons on time, and get home earlier. Requirements vary by district, so families interested in either option should contact Marylaura as soon as possible before school schedules are finalized.

Wimberley ISD families interested in bus transportation should contact the school transportation department to determine the appropriate bus route and then contact Marylaura for scheduling information.

Attendance & Tuition

A one-time annual supply fee is due at registration each school year. Your first month's tuition

reserves your rider's weekly lesson time for the school year. Lessons are not month-to-month. Consistent attendance allows riders, horses, and lesson groups to continue progressing together. If a lesson must be missed, please notify Marylaura as soon as possible. Makeup lessons are limited, based on availability, and must be completed within **30 days** when offered.

Safety

Safety always comes first. ASTM/SEI-approved helmets are required whenever handling or riding horses, including catching, leading, and mounted activities. Riding outside scheduled lessons or in trails, fields, or pastures without instructor approval is not permitted. Visits outside lesson times should also be approved.

Please do not drop off your child until an instructor is present and your rider has checked in unless other arrangements have been made with Marylaura in advance.

Respect for Our Horses & Barn

Our lesson horses are one of Hunters Chase Farms' greatest assets. Their quiet minds and success are the result of consistent training, handling, nutrition, quality care, herd management, and daily routines. Every part of their care is intentional.

Please do not feed treats, hay, grain, supplements, or anything else to any horse or animal without instructor approval. Occasionally, approved treats may be given **in a bucket**. If you have questions about this policy, we are always happy to explain.

When catching or returning horses, stay focused on the task. Correctly release the horse, allow it to move away from the gate, exit the pen immediately, and securely close the gate. Do not remain inside a pasture with loose horses unless instructed by a coach.

Every rider is responsible for cleaning tack, returning equipment, picking up manure, leaving wash racks, cross ties, and grooming areas clean, and putting away anything they use. Respect horses, equipment, facilities, and fellow riders at all times.

Large wooden lockers are reserved for boarders and lease riders. Additional locker space may be available upon request. Riders attending multiple lessons each week may keep labeled water bottles in their locker or the designated refrigerator. Please do not store food in lockers.

Lease Horses

Most riders benefit from riding many different horses before leasing or purchasing. Riding a variety of horses builds stronger, more confident, and more adaptable riders. When an instructor believes leasing would benefit a rider, they will discuss available options with your family.

Most riders are not approved to lease until reaching a more advanced level, although every rider's situation is different. Lease recommendations are based on ability, goals, horse availability, and program needs. Because every lease is unique, general costs and requirements cannot be provided. In many cases, investing in additional lesson time provides greater long-term benefit than leasing or purchasing early.

Horse Shows

Hunters Chase Farms horse shows are an important part of the learning experience and are strongly encouraged, although not required. Shows build confidence, sportsmanship, responsibility, and goal setting while allowing riders to apply the skills learned in lessons. Because horse shows require extensive planning, staffing, horses, scheduling, and expenses well in advance, horse show fees are generally non-refundable.

Communication & Social Media

GroupMe is our primary source of communication for weather updates, lesson changes, horse shows, events, reminders, and announcements. Please keep conversations relevant to the entire group. Questions specific to your rider should be directed privately to Marylaura.

We encourage riders to communicate directly with their instructors whenever possible. Learning to ask questions, discuss goals, and work through challenges helps build confidence and independence.

Phones should remain in the designated phone area, backpack, or tack room during lessons—not in pockets or carried while working with horses—unless permission is given by an instructor.

Photos and videos are welcome for educational purposes and special memories. Please respect the privacy of our riders, instructors, horses, and families. Do not post negative, disrespectful, or misleading content involving Hunters Chase Farms, or share photos or videos of falls, injuries, or other sensitive situations. If something would not be respectful to say in person, it should not be posted online.

Positive Barn Culture

Every rider contributes to the atmosphere of Hunters Chase Farms. Be kind. Encourage one another. Respect instructors, horses, fellow riders, and our facility. Accept coaching with a positive attitude and represent Hunters Chase Farms with honesty, integrity, and sportsmanship both at the barn and online. By working together, we create a safe, supportive environment where riders develop confidence, responsibility, character, and a lifelong love of horses.

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Hunters Chase Farms family. We look forward to another wonderful year together!

Acknowledgement

I have read and understand the **Hunters Chase Farms Lesson Program Handbook & Family Agreement** and agree to follow the policies and expectations outlined above.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

**WARNING: UNDER TEXAS LAW (CHAPTER 87, CIVIL PRACTICE AND REMEDIES CODE),
A FARM ANIMAL PROFESSIONAL OR FARM OWNER OR LESSEE IS NOT LIABLE FOR
AN INJURY TO OR THE DEATH OF A PARTICIPANT IN FARM ANIMAL ACTIVITIES,
INCLUDING AN EMPLOYEE OR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR, RESULTING FROM THE
INHERENT RISKS OF FARM ANIMAL ACTIVITIES.**