

NEW KINGDOM TRAILRIDERS RIDER HANDBOOK



**18929 81ST STREET
SHERRARD, IL 61281**

2025

Office Contact Info

Office phone: (309) 764-4220
Address: 18929 81st Street
Sherrard, IL 61281
General Email address: info@nktriders.org
Website: www.nktriders.org

CONTACTS:

Kelly Kreiter Penning – Executive Director	(563) 528-1708	kelly@nktriders.org
Louise Ballanger – Instructor	(563) 570-3146	louise@nktriders.org
Allison Langan – Accountant Admin. Assistant		allison@nktriders.org
Monika Murphy – Program Director/Instructor	(636) 328-5060	monika@nktriders.org
Sharon Vershaw – Instructor	(563) 529-6756	svershaw25@gmail.com
Bryanna Wright – Operations Lead/Instructor	(309) 912-8661	bryanna@nktriders.org

Board of Directors:

Cheryl Wright – President	Denise Church – Member
Timothy Thor – Vice President	Matthew DeBisschop – Member
Dave Emerick – Treasurer	Tim Fanella – Member
Jennifer White – Secretary	Allen Holdsworth – Member
Katey Bignall – Member	Vallie Masias – Member
Kelly Carnes – Member	Jordan Kirkbride – Associate Director

2025 Riding Season Dates:

Lesson Sessions

Session 1 February 24th – April 4th
Sign-ups close Feb 3rd

Session 2 April 14th – May 23rd
Sign-ups close March 24th

Session 3 June 2nd – July 11th
Sign-ups close May 12th

Session 4 July 21st – August 29th
Sign-ups close June 30th

Session 5 September 9th – October 17th
Sign-ups closed

Session 6 October 27th – December 5th
Sign-ups closed

No Lessons/Office Closed

Jan. 1 – New Year's Day

May 26 – Memorial Day

July 4 – Independence Day

Sept. 1 – Labor Day

Nov. 27 – Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 28 – Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve

Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

****Sign up closure dates are subject to change based on availability for each session****

INTRODUCTION

New Kingdom Trailriders (NKT) is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 by a group of Christian horse owners who wished to dedicate their animals towards helping people. Their desire produced this therapeutic horseback riding program to serve people who have special challenges.

The three-dimensional rolling gait of the horse can help relax spastic muscles and increase joint mobility, promotes strength, balance, and good posture. The social nature and structured environment of the riding classes provide mental stimulation and can help improve concentration and verbal skills. Many riders gain self-confidence and improved overall wellbeing.

ACCREDITATION

NKT is a Premier Accredited Center with PATH Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International). PATH Intl. is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists. With more than 4,800 certified instructors and equine specialists and 881 member centers, more than 8,000 PATH Intl. members around the globe help more than 66,000 children and adults—including more than 6,200 veterans and active-duty military personnel—with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges find strength and independence through the power of the horse each year. There are more than 62,000 volunteers, 5,011 credentialed professionals, 7,800 equines and thousands of contributors at PATH Intl. Member Centers inspiring and enriching the human spirit.

LESSON DESCRIPTIONS

NKT provides Therapeutic or Adaptive Riding lessons to riders over the age of 4 with physical, mental, social and/or emotional struggles. Our group lessons are 45 minutes once a week for 6 weeks and private lessons are 30 minutes once a week for 6 weeks throughout the session.

The instructors and staff of NKT work hard to ensure each rider is given the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. With that in mind, each rider is paired with a horse, instructor, volunteer(s) and other riders according riding ability and therapeutic need. NKT strives to maintain consistency with each lesson, keeping riders with the same horses, volunteers and instructors. At times this may not be possible. NKT Staff reserves the right to make changes to the riders horse, volunteer or instructor as needed.

It is NKT's goal that each lesson is "hands on horses." However, if conditions do not allow for mounted or unmounted lessons, classroom/modified lessons are given. Classroom/modified lessons give riders the opportunity to learn more about horses, the care of horses, and horse safety. See the Cancellation Policy section for more detailed information.

RIDING SCHEDULE/LESSON AVAILABILITY

NKT's riding schedule consists of six, six-week sessions with a break week in between. The season generally starts the last week of February and goes to the first week of December.

- Lessons are given Monday through Friday and scheduled according to availability of Certified Instructors and volunteers.
- Lessons are filled on a first come, first served basis. If all lesson slots are full, the participant will be placed on a waiting list. The rider can be added to lessons as the appropriate time slot becomes available.
- Riders are matched to a suitable horse. NKT considers the individual limitations of each horse based on the horse's size, temperament, age, and physical condition. If a suitable horse is not available, the rider can opt to be placed on the waiting list.
- Lessons are held only if there is a Certified Instructor present as well as a sufficient number of trained volunteers.

RIDER ELIGIBILITY

- Rider must be at least 4 years old.
- Rider must face physical, mental, social and/or emotional challenges as determined collaboratively with NKT Staff and/or participants medical team.
- A risk/benefit review is considered to ensure the rider will benefit from and not be harmed by riding.
- Rider's weight **cannot exceed 220 pounds**. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis – Weight must be noted on Physician Medical Release.
 - ☐ 220 lbs. for a well-balanced centered Participant not requiring sidewalkers.
 - ☐ 180 lbs. for an unbalanced Participant needing sidewalker assistance.

REFUSAL POLICY

New Kingdom Trailriders reserves the right to refuse and/or revoke a participant's riding privileges or dismiss a rider prior to the lesson's end.

Possible grounds for refusal and/or revocation of riding privileges or dismissal of a rider may include, but are not limited to: conduct that endangers, harasses, or bullies another participant, volunteer, staff, or the horse, conduct endangering themselves, conduct that blatantly disregards instructors direction or group participation, consistent failure to follow safety procedures with respect to the horses and facility, a gain in weight above the maximum level, failure to cancel in advance for more than three lessons, incomplete paperwork, and/or a failure to pay for lessons. Also included is the development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point where horseback riding is no longer beneficial or could be harmful to the participant or where safety for the participant or others has become a concern.

New Kingdom Trailriders reserves the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the applicant's safety and/or the safety of the horses, volunteers, staff, facility, or for other reasons in accordance with PATH, Intl. operating center guidelines.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A potential rider must register annually by contacting New Kingdom Trailriders at (309)764-4220 or going online at www.nktriders.org to obtain the appropriate forms. Once NKT receives a properly completed application and supporting documentation (if applicable), email Monika at monika@nktriders.org to schedule an intake and review available session spots.

A Rider Intake is conducted at the barn and consists of a tour, an assessment of the rider, and a brief interview to determine a rider's ability and needs. A new rider must be approved before they will be allowed to ride.

Once a rider is enrolled, should there be no lesson and/or suitable horse available, the rider will be placed on the waiting list. The rider remains on the list until an appropriate lesson slot becomes available. At that time, the rider can choose to take the open time or remain on the list until a more suitable slot opens.

ANNUAL PAPERWORK UPDATE POLICY

New Kingdom Trailriders requires that each rider submit paperwork **ANNUALLY**.

The rider's first riding season (year) they will be required to submit the full packet of rider paperwork. When riding in the following 2 consecutive years, the rider's will only be required to complete the 'Rider Update Paperwork Form'. If the rider does not ride in consecutive seasons (years) the rider will then be required to submit the full rider packet upon return. A full packet of paperwork must be submitted once every 3 years.

NKT's accrediting organization, Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, requires that riders with Down syndrome, complete the full packet annually – specifically the annual neurological exam from a licensed physician must be signed and submitted.

Year 1 – Full Rider Packet	Year 2 – Rider Update Paperwork	Year 3 – Rider Update Paperwork
Year 4 – Full Rider Packet	Year 5 – Rider Update Paperwork	Year 6 – Rider Update Paperwork

LESSON FEES AND PAYMENT POLICY

Riders are required to pay for each six-week session they participate in.

Group Lesson Rate: \$150

Private Lesson Rate: \$180

- A \$25 (Group lesson)/\$30 (Private lesson) NON-REFUNDABLE HOLD FEE must be paid to ensure a rider's spot in a session. This fee must be paid prior to each session the rider wants to participate in and will be applied to the session fee.
- Session fees **MUST BE PAID** by the first lesson of each session.
- Riders will NOT be allowed to ride if fees are not paid by the second lesson.
- Riders who are delinquent in paying their fees and have not made arrangements for a payment schedule are ineligible to enroll for additional sessions until their account is brought current.
- Any credits/balance that remains in a rider's Quickbooks account for more than two years, with no communication of intent for use, the remaining balance will be considered a donation to NKT.

RIDER HOLD FEE POLICY

Once a lesson day and time has been selected for the rider, they will be asked to secure their spot by paying a hold fee. A hold fee is a \$25(group) or \$30(private) advance payment of their session fees for each session they would like to secure. By paying this fee the rider states they have intent to participate in the specified session/s. If the rider elects to not participate in a held session, less than 6 weeks before the session start date, the rider will still be responsible for payment of the entire session fee for the held session.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (SCHOLARSHIPS)

Limited funds are available to assist in cases of financial need. Riders may indicate the need for assistance during the application process. Participants will need to provide the following paperwork for the Scholarship Committee's review prior to the beginning of EACH requested session:

- New Kingdom Trailriders Scholarship Application (See website)
- Completed rider forms packet

THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT CONSIDER INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.

ABSENCE POLICY

Consideration for NKT volunteers and staff time is appreciated. Riders are asked to give 24-hour notice whenever possible if unable to attend a class or event. To report an absence please call 309-764-4220 and/or your instructor. When able, please add date to the white board in the arena. **NKT is unable to make-up lessons or refund fees due to rider absences/cancellations.**

LESSON CANCELLATIONS

The safety and good health of riders, volunteers, and horses is of utmost importance. If the riding portion of the lesson is unable to proceed, a modified lesson may be offered in its place. If weather conditions are too threatening to be on site, a replacement/make-up lesson will be offered on the same day and time during 'break week' in between sessions.

Modified Lessons will occur if:

- Heat Index is 93 or above
- Temperature is 20 or below
- High Winds
- Thunder or lightning
- Lack of volunteers, instructors or horses

Modified Lessons will consist of:

- Ground work/Obstacles
- Horse care and safety
- Classroom lessons

NKT will make every attempt to notify riders of any cancellations.

IF IN DOUBT CALL

309-764-4220

NKT is unable to make-up lessons or refund fees due to rider absences/cancellations.

CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS FOR RIDERS

HELMETS ARE MANDATORY for any rider who is mounted on or working with a horse. NKT provides helmets that are ASTM/SEI rated. Riders may bring their own ASTM/SEI rated helmet with instructor approval. The helmet must sit directly on the rider's head for proper fit.

Helmets have an expiration date. If the rider purchases their own helmet, that helmet must be replaced every 5 years.

Long pants are recommended however, three quarter length pants and appropriate length shorts are acceptable. NKT asks that riders do not wear long, flowing, dangling, or loose clothing or jewelry or slick jogging-type pants due to safety concerns.

Sturdy shoes with moderate heels, oxfords, or riding boots are recommended. Tennis shoes are acceptable if boots are not available. **For safety reasons, CROCS, SANDALS, BALLET FLATS, FLIP FLOPS, OR OPEN TOES SHOES ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

New Kingdom Trailriders apparel is available for sale at a variety of times throughout the year.

RIDER/PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Any rider arriving 15 MINUTES OR MORE past lesson start time, will not be allowed to ride. Exceptions may be made if the instructor was notified ahead of time.
- A 24-hour notice of absence is required whenever possible. *A white board is provided in the arena where written notice can be given.*
- Have payments made in a timely manner (see Payment Policy).
- Rider is dressed appropriately (see Clothing Requirements for Riders).
- Riders must stay in the designated viewing/parent area when not mounted on horseback.
- **REFRAIN FROM ENTERING THE STALL AREA OF THE BARN.**
- Notify Instructor of any changing conditions of the rider.
- Parents are required to remain in the designated viewing area in the arena or outside of the arena gate throughout the lesson.

BARN RULES

- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- No yelling/screaming/rock throwing/obscene behavior, language, or gestures.
- No standing on gates or fences.
- No running.
- Drive slowly on farm property.
- **No pets!** Please do not bring your pets to our facility. There are no exceptions to this rule due to safety concerns. Service animals are permitted.
- Horse stalls are off limits to students unless allowed and supervised by an instructor.
- Get permission before feeding our horses treats as NKT monitors the horse's diets closely. Please do not hand feed horses.
- Pick up after yourself.
- If you open a gate, close it.
- Gates and doors must be closed during lessons. Be sure to call out when you open the arena gate and shut it.
- **ALCOHOL, DRUGS, VAPING AND SMOKING ARE PROHIBITED ON SITE.**

<p>If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Executive Director by calling 309-764-4220 or emailing kelly@nktriders.org</p>
--

Mission Statement:

To empower individuals of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential through equine assisted activities.

Vision Statement:

New Kingdom Trailriders strives to become the leading standard uniting people with horses through acceptance and encouragement to achieve emotional and physical wellness.