



High Hopes Re-Open Phases and Guidelines For Volunteers, Participants and their Families

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding is committed to providing the safest environment possible for our participants, volunteers, and staff. To ensure we are doing so as thoroughly as possible, we have reviewed State of Connecticut, Federal, and PATH International guidelines and have updated our reopen plan as of June 24th, 2020. In the event additional best practice protocols are released, we will update our plan accordingly. Our expectation is that all staff, participants, and volunteers will follow the guidelines of this document. If there are questions or concerns regarding the ability to meet these expectations at return, please let us know immediately by emailing cbourn@highhopestr.org.

Phases:

- Phase One- minimal feeding volunteers return
- Phase Two- Low risk, independent riders, carriage drivers who can drive AI independently, and independent unmounted/ELP participants return
- Phase Three- Low risk participants with leaders and select horse handler volunteers return
- Phase Four- Low risk participants with leaders and sidewalkers, carriage drivers, and unmounted/ELP participants, sidewalking, carriage driving header, and ELP volunteers
- Phase Five- All interested participants, barn and office volunteers return

General Guidelines

- High Hopes will be open by appointment and to scheduled volunteers/participants only.
- Staff, volunteers, and participants will stay home if they or someone they reside with are feeling ill.
- All participants and volunteers must sign a COVID liability waiver prior to their first engagement at High Hopes: <https://highhopestr.org/05/22/covid-19-release/>
- All staff, volunteers, and participants must provide their own masks until such time regulations are lifted.
- Hand washing and/or hand sanitizing is required immediately upon entrance for all staff, volunteers, and participants. Gloves are not recommended for PPE by state or federal guidelines.
- High Hopes staff are responsible for disinfecting common services multiple times daily.
- High Hopes staff requested survey response from all volunteers and participants regarding their comfort and risk level then will assign volunteers and participants based on the below phase system. In addition to state, federal, and PATH, International guidelines, programming will reflect the number of individuals comfortable and capable of coming back.
- To minimize risk, our plan accounts for minimized “touches” to common items. Please note role specific changes within each phase.
- Volunteer and participants schedules may change between phases (different days/times) to accommodate various guidelines.
- Volunteer and participant activities may change (as appropriate based on capability/training/appropriateness) to accommodate disinfecting, phase changes, and efficacy.

Phase Three- Begins July 1st

During Phase Three, leaders and participants (who do not possess significant risk factors and who are comfortable) who utilize a leader during mounted lessons may return. Unless there are significant changes in guidelines, phase three will persist through July and August.

Participants

Participants must provide their own helmets/appropriate footwear. If you are in need of recommendations for helmets/footwear and/or cannot manage purchasing your own please let us know. Masks must be worn from the time you exit your car until you mount and are 6 feet away from instructors and/or volunteers. This means that participants with volunteers will likely need to wear a mask for the entirety of their lesson. Face shields do not “count” as face masks, and masks must be worn over the nose and mouth.

Lessons will occur in the outdoor arena unless there is inclement or extremely hot weather. Your horse will be groomed/tacked/schooled as necessary and will wait for you near the outdoor mounting ramp unless otherwise specified by a staff member. If mounting inside is necessary, participants will enter through the dutch door near Aladdin’s stall and turn right to wait in the barn aisle (outside the tack room). Hand sanitizer is required prior to mounting and will be available on the mounting ramp.

If the participant is driven by a transportation company, parent/family, or staff member they may observe the lesson from the picnic tables, with masks on, being mindful of distancing. Drivers may not idle in the parking lot for the entirety of the lesson (same as before). Spectators are not otherwise permitted at this time. Please avoid going inside unless necessary to use the restroom- if you do need to use the restroom, please enter through the green door near the mounting ramp, do not walk through the sliding doors and into the lounge.

Last, though we have missed seeing and talking to you, please plan to leave promptly after your lesson. No walks around the property or visits down the runway are permitted at this time.

Volunteers

Masks must be worn from the time you exit your car and for the entirety of your volunteering unless you are outside and 6 feet away from others. Face shields do not “count” as face masks, and masks must be worn over the nose and mouth.

Leaders will enter the facility through right barn aisle door near Teddys’ stall. Prior to touching any item, volunteers must disinfect their hands with the provided sanitizer. In the event multiple volunteers arrive at once, they should not congregate and must remain 6 feet away from others. Volunteer name badges for first time returning volunteers as well as the daily schedule will be available immediately after hand sanitizing at a table nearby. Staff will set out tack and to minimize risk leaders will not go into the tack room. In most cases, staff will have all horses turned in for their volunteers, unless otherwise specified in advance. Volunteers will groom and tack the horses they are leading, unless the horse is being schooled prior to their lesson (which will be communicated in advance). After the lesson, volunteers will untack, groom/bathe, and turn out. In the event they are not available to do so, High Hopes staff will.

Unless entirely unavoidable, leaders will only volunteer in one class per day. Volunteers should log their hours through the website at <https://highhopestr.org/volunteers/current-volunteers/volunteer-hours-log/> and should bring their name badges home. Leaders will not enter the building unless necessary to use the restroom- if they do need to use the restroom, they should enter through the green door near the mounting ramp, they should not walk through the sliding doors and into the lounge.

Last, though we have missed seeing and talking to you, please plan to leave promptly after your volunteering. No walks around the property or visits down the runway are permitted at this time.