

SPIRIT Participant Protection Policies

All SPIRIT staff and volunteers must complete a background check that covers: National Criminal Search (Standard), Sex Offender Search, SSN Trace, Global Watchlist Search as well as central registry check

General Purpose Statement

SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the participants of SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

Selection of Staff/Volunteers

All persons who desire to work with the participants in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

Written Application

All persons seeking to work with the participants must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by SPIRIT. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program affiliation, employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program.

Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

Criminal Background Check

All staff and volunteers agree to have a background check search as well as central registry check completed by SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program.

A disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with the participants will be determined by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis considering all the surrounding circumstances. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file by SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult staff will be in attendance at all times when participants are being supervised during our programs and activities. We do not allow participants to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

For purposes of this policy, “abuse” is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a participants physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Participant abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a participant that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the participant is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a participant and an adult, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a participant of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

In the event that an individual involved in the care of participants at SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a participant under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Executive Director and Board of Directors for further action, including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. Decisions about further investigation will be left to parents/guardians
3. The staff or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she should be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.
4. All allegations of abuse should be reported to the civil authorities, and the organization will comply with the state’s requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. The organization will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
5. The organization will designate a spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media

inquiries or releasing information about the situation. All other representatives of the organization should refrain from speaking to the media.

6. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with participants.

Open Door Policy

Facility doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of participants. Staff should consult with Executive or Program Director if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Accidental Injuries to Participants

In the event that a participant is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, staff will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the participants parent or guardian of the injury at the time the participant is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the participant has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Sick Participant Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the participants at SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other participants when deciding whether to place a participant under our care. In general, participants with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections; and/or
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease.

Participants who are observed by our staff to be ill will be separated from other participants and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the participant be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the participants under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick participant policy. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of participants with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such participants should address their situation with Executive or Program Director to develop a plan of action.

Approved by Board of Directors:

8/26/2022

Date

Sam Schwall

Signature

President, Board of Directors
SPIRIT O.E.