

Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC

11906 Shooting Club Rd.

Raleigh, NC 27613

(919) 844-2088

(919) 844-2089

www.southernequestriancenter.com

Welcome

Thank you for choosing Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC, for your Equestrian Education. We strive to provide a happy and safe environment for everyone involved in our program, from students, parents, and visitors to horses and instructors. We look forward to helping you learn, grow, and become a well-rounded horse person.

From horse behavior to grooming, to proper tacking to riding basics, our lessons focus on safety first and fundamental skill development both on the ground and in the saddle. We believe understanding horse care along with a strong foundation of basic skills will help you become a talented and compassionate horse enthusiast.

As your knowledge grows and your skills strengthen, you will move on to more advanced components of riding, including jumping and field riding. Just as each horse is different, each person's development as a rider is different. Please consider this as you progress through the various facets of our program.

To enhance your horse education and make new friends, consider joining our barn's 4H club – the Hi Ho Hunters. Through educational, service, and social activities, the Hi Ho Hunters 4H Club provides opportunities to learn even more while having fun with new friends.

Please take a moment to read our Lesson Program Handbook to ensure that you understand and get the most benefit from your participation in our program. The policies necessary to keep our program running efficiently are explained. You will find answers to questions about enrollment and billing, scheduling and inclement weather, and absences and make-up lessons.

We welcome you to Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC. Thanks for allowing us to share your unique journey into the world of horses.

Types of Lessons* and Fees

	Per lesson	Deposit
(A1) Groups (Walk, Trot, Canter, & Jumping) 7 students 30 minutes grooming and tacking 1 hour in the saddle 30 minutes untacking, cooling out, and grooming	\$37.50	\$150.00
(A2) Semi-Private (All levels; limited availability) 2-3 students 30 minutes grooming and tacking 45 minutes in the saddle 30 minutes untacking, cooling out, and grooming	\$47.50	\$190.00
(A3) Private (All levels; limited availability) 1 student 30 minutes grooming and tacking 30 minutes in the saddle 30 minutes untacking, cooling out, and grooming limited availability	\$47.50	\$190.00
(A4) Introduction to the Horse 2 students and two horses 30 minutes grooming/tacking or grooming/untacking 30 minutes per student in the saddle	\$42.50	\$170.00
(A5) Walk/Trot Equitation 6 students 30 minutes grooming and tacking 1 hour in the saddle 30 minutes untacking, cooling out, and grooming	\$42.50	\$170.00
(A6) Maiden Rider 4 students 30 minutes grooming and tacking 45 minutes in the saddle 30 minutes untacking, cooling out, and grooming	\$42.50	\$170.00

*Release of Liability Form is Required for Every Rider

All riders must have a signed "Release of Liability" Form on file in the Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC, office. This is our adaptation of the standard form developed by the State of North Carolina. This form also provides us with important information, including your address, phone number, and email address. If more than one family member joins the lesson program, simply add their names and re-sign the same form. Also, please inform us of any address or telephone number, or email address changes so that we can get in touch with you if necessary.

Lesson Details

Introduction to the Horse (A4)

Introduction to the Horse is structured to provide close interaction between trainer and student as the new rider learns how to handle, groom, and tack or untack a horse/pony. Classes include two students, two horses, and one instructor. Each student gets a 30 minute lesson in the saddle and 30 minutes hands-on horse care. Students in this introductory class gain proficiency in a variety of areas. Following appropriate safety rules (see *Student Handbook*), the student learns to groom, tack or untack, and handle a horse independently on the ground. Students learn fundamental balance and form at the halt, walk, two-point and vertical positions. In addition, students learn to post at the trot and halt the horse using their aids.

Maiden Rider (A6)

The *Maiden Rider* class builds on the foundation established in *Introduction to the Horse*. In addition to the posting trot, new concepts are introduced, including posting on the correct diagonal, sitting trot, and two-point and vertical positions at the trot. Riders learn to drop and pick up their stirrups at the walk and trot and ride without stirrups for short distances while maintaining proper form. In addition, students learn to use a driving leg to ride the horse, handle their mount confidently on the ground and in the saddle, and demonstrate consistent balance and form at sitting trot, posting trot, vertical and two-point positions. Students are introduced to steering and transitions using their aids. Students at this level are responsible for the entire horse care process, including grooming, tacking, untacking and cooling out their mount.

Walk/Trot Equitation (A5)

The *Walk/Trot Equitation* class transitions beginner riders from the comfort of the small, enclosed arenas to the larger arenas on the property. Six students, each with their own mount, practice the skills developed in the *Maiden Rider* class with the added challenge of maneuvering around a large arena at a safe distance from other horses. Steering exercises along with proper form and balance are a focus of the *Walk/Trot Equitation* lesson, teaching students to use their bodies to communicate where they want the horse to go. Students also learn safety rules for riding in a crowded arena, while continuing to develop consistency in body position and confidence as a rider. Riders refine their equitation as well as learn to ride their horse through a variety of obstacles, including over ground poles, and around cones. Introductory course work using ground poles, equitation patterns, and field riding are introduced at this level. Students at this level are responsible for the entire horse care process, including grooming, tacking, untacking and cooling out their mount.

To move out of the *Walk/Trot Equitation* lesson into the *Walk/Trot/Canter & Jumping Groups*, students must demonstrate competency, confidence, and consistency as a rider. A strong consistent leg; soft considerate hands; straight, tall body position, use of the seat, and balance in the heel must be second nature. Posting on the correct diagonal, reversing correctly, maneuvering safely amongst other horses and correct steering must also be mastered.

Group Lessons (Walk, Trot, Canter, & Jumping)

The standard group lesson has a maximum of seven students. Riders progress to more challenging skills, including cantering and jumping. Students in these lessons are placed in groups with similarly skilled riders. Fence heights correspond with skill-level.

Private and Semi-Private Lessons

Once enrolled in a group lesson, students may want to add additional lessons. Riding more frequently can help the rider master fundamentals more quickly as leg muscles develop with repetition. Students may choose to add another group lesson weekly or a private or semi-private lesson. In order to enroll in private or semi-private lessons, students using school horses must first be registered in a group lesson. Private and semi-private lessons are scheduled to supplement the lessons learned in the group. If interested in semi-private or private lessons, speak with your trainer for details.

Lesson Enrollment

Requirements

- (1) Students are required to enroll in a minimum of four regularly scheduled lessons per month. This structure enables the rider to progress in skill and the barn to budget successfully to meet financial obligations.
- (2) A deposit equal to one month's lesson fees is required upon enrollment in the lesson program. This payment is your "Security Deposit Balance." This deposit is fully refundable with two-weeks written notice of withdrawal from the lesson program. Upon notice of withdrawal, your deposit is applied to your remaining lesson balance, covering all or part of your final bill. (If a credit balance remains, it will be refunded to you by check.)

Lesson Time Structure

Group lessons require a two-hour time block. Students in our program are responsible for not only riding, but also caring for the horse before and after the lesson. A typical lesson allows 30 minutes for grooming and tacking, 45-60 minutes for instruction, and 30 minutes for untacking, cooling out, and returning tack and brushes to the proper place. (*Introduction to the Horse* lessons require a one hour time block, with 30 minutes grooming and tacking or untacking and 30 minutes in the saddle.)

Student Responsibilities

Lesson students are required to take proper care of the horse they ride as well as the equipment they use to prepare for the lesson. Each student must properly cool out and groom their horse and return all tack and brushes to their proper place in the tack room. They are also required to pick up any messes their horse leaves behind. We believe these responsibilities create a well-rounded equestrian who understands both horse care and riding skills.

Scheduling

Absences and Make-Up Lessons

- If you will be absent from a lesson for any reason, **24 hours notice is required** for a make-up lesson to be available. Please leave a message on the barn phone to assure that the absence is recorded on the lesson pages. (844-2088)
- Late cancellations or 'no shows' will be billed just as if you had taken the lesson.
- You may take advantage of a make-up class for **only one absence in any given month**. **This applies to both leases and lessons. There will be no exceptions to this policy.** If a student is away for two weeks in a month – whether on vacation, enrolled in a driver's education program, or ill – she will only receive a make up for one lesson. Early or multiple make ups in a month are not available.
- If the barn cancels a lesson for any reason, you will receive a make-up lesson.
- Make-up lessons remain on the books for three months. It is your responsibility to keep track of available make-up lessons and schedule them with your trainer.
- When making up a lesson, remember to code the make-up using the initials "MU" on the lesson page and also include the make-up date you are using. (There is a space for this on the far right-hand side of the schedule page.)
- If you do not code the lesson as a make-up (MU), the barn will charge you for an extra lesson.
- Remember to record the lesson as a MU on the day it is taken. Once the day's lesson pages are entered into the computer, changes will not be made and the lesson will be billed as an extra lesson.
- Every third or fourth month contains a fifth class meeting. This can be handled in one of the following ways:
 - If you are present for all 5 classes, you will be billed for 5 lessons in the month
 - If you have a make-up due, one of these 5 classes can be used as a make-up. Remember to code it as a MU and provide the date of the absence to assure that you receive credit.
 - If you will be absent from any one of the required four classes in the month, you may cancel the class and request that it be coded as the 5th class. **You must give 24 hours notice when canceling the 5th class and request the class be coded as "5th"** In this instance, you will not be charged for the fifth class, nor will you receive a make-up since your enrollment requirement is four lessons per month.

Weather Cancellations

Occasionally, it is necessary to cancel classes due to inclement weather. If the barn decides that it is unsafe to ride, the outgoing message on the office answering machine will be changed to reflect the cancellation. If you call the barn and the message is not changed, lessons will be held according to the usual schedule. Sometimes unexpected storms will crop up and require last minute cancellations. Although this is an inconvenience, this is the nature of an outdoor sport. **To ensure the safety of our students, staff, and horses, we require all riders to dismount and return the horses to their stalls any time thunder is heard near the barn.** Keep in mind that you will receive a make-up any time lessons are cancelled due to inclement weather.

Barn Cancellations

If the barn or your trainer cancels a lesson for any reason, you automatically receive a make-up lesson for the cancelled date.

Billing

Distribution

Bills are mailed to customers during the first week of the month.

Payment

Payment is due on or before the 15th of each month. A \$15.00 fee will be charged for late payments.

Place your payment in the small black 'mailbox' just to the right of the tack room door or mail to:
Southern Oak Equestrian Center, 11906 Shooting Club Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613.

Electronic or Mail Payments

Please process your electronic payment or mail your check as early in the month as possible so that the barn can meet its financial obligations in a timely fashion.

Withdrawal

Temporary Withdrawal from the Lesson Program

Options if you will be away from your lesson for extended absences due to camps, travels or other reasons:

- (1) *Withdrawal from the lesson program* – Give at least two weeks written notice of your withdrawal. When you return, you will be placed on the waiting list and may resume lessons when an appropriate space becomes available.
- (2) *Reserve your lesson slot* – Hold your lesson slot with a reservation fee of half the normal monthly tuition. This charge assures you of the same time slot when you return. Please give us two weeks advance notice of your return date. No make-up lessons will accrue during the reservation period.

Permanent Withdrawal from the Lesson Program

Give Proper Notice

In consideration of our financial responsibilities, we require **two weeks written notice of withdrawal** from the lesson program. The two weeks notice will begin upon receipt of your written notification. Less time does not enable us to contact and place new students from our waiting list into your slot. One month's notice in advance of withdrawal will ensure that your security deposit covers the cost of your last month's enrollment.

Make-Up Lesson Considerations when Withdrawing

Make-up lessons are for currently enrolled students. They are scheduled in between your regular lessons. Make-up lessons may not be used to extend the number of weekly lessons you complete after withdrawing from the program. If you withdraw from active lesson enrollment, any make-up lessons due will be forfeited.

Refunds

Other than your security deposit funds, no cash refunds can be given; however, if you have a prepaid lessons balance, this may be carried for up to 12 months, allowing you to return to the lesson program when your situation permits. If you choose to return to the program, keep in mind that you may be placed on our waiting list until an appropriate lesson slot becomes available.

Leasing Policy

The leasing program at Southern Oak Equestrian Center provides an opportunity for lesson students to practice the skills presented in lessons. It is meant to build on the foundation established during weekly groups, enabling the rider to develop confidence while riding independently. The leasing program also prepares students who wish to participate in local horse shows, enabling them to build a relationship with one horse.

Opportunities for leasing are only available to currently enrolled lesson students. The director of training must be confident that the student has achieved a level of competency and responsibility that will make leasing beneficial to his/her development as a rider. In addition to riding ability and maturity, the student must also demonstrate consistent consideration for the schooling program's horses, routinely grooming, tacking, cooling out, and riding with care.

Off-Site Show Requirements

In the interest of safety and success, students in the SOEC schooling program who wish to show off the property are required to develop a relationship with a horse through our lease program. Each rider must complete 24 rides on the selected lease horse before traveling to an away show. Depending on which competitions they aim for, riders may also be required to participate in clinics to prepare them for a successful show day. Students are also responsible for proper show attire. (**Note: School horses, even when being leased, are not allowed to jump more than 2'3" at home or away.)

Additional costs of showing may include but are not limited to:

\$50/dayhorse use fee

\$45 - \$75 trailer fee (depending on distance from SOEC)

\$50/day training fee

\$8 – \$25 class fee (per class entered, usually 4 or 5 classes per division)

Other show fees that may arise include: grounds fees, stall and shavings fees, and the cost of appropriate show attire.

Note: Lease days may not be substituted to cover other barn expenses, including show leasing fees, trainer fees, trailer fees, class fees, or lesson fees.

Leasing Rules

A parent/guardian must be present during all lease rides. All safety rules and care procedures used for weekly lessons apply during any lease ride. The rider must groom and tack properly before riding. Once in the arena, the rider must properly warm up the horse before beginning the work session. **(Please note:** Only the student on this lease agreement is allowed to ride the horse being leased! Friends and family may come and watch the lease ride, but may not ride the horse due to safety & liability reasons.) At the conclusion of the lease ride, the horse must be appropriately cooled out and groomed. Failure to comply with leasing rules will void the lease agreement.

Third Lease

For the third lease "practice ride," the entire ride is flat work only -- equitation patterns, transition work, dressage tests, etc -- as suggested by your trainer.

Half and Full Lease

For half & full lease rides, you must designate one weekly lease ride as a ride on the flat. The additional ride(s) should be divided as follows: perform 2/3 of the lease time as flat/ground work, cantering only two laps in each direction. You may jump, but no higher than 2' fences and no more than a total of 12 jumps during a single, one-hour lease period. Fences must be a combination of cross-rails and verticals not exceeding the 2' height limit. When it is a designated "flat week" by Southern Oak Equestrian Center, your additional weekly lease rides must also be on the flat.

Horse Choice

Deciding which horse to lease is a conversation to begin having with your trainer before you actually begin your lease term. Once your instructor knows that you plan on taking this step, she will suggest horses you may want to try before making a decision. Be sure to discuss your goals with your instructor before starting your lease. Some things to consider: Do you plan on competing at area horse shows? Do you want to further your riding skills through an open lease (enables the rider to chose different horses for each lease ride)? Or do you simply want to ride your favorite school horse every time? Answers to these questions will help your trainer find the right horse/rider combination to help you achieve your goals.

Injury or Illness to Lease Horse

If the horse you have chosen to lease is unavailable due to lost shoe, injury, or illness, you may either chose to ride a different horse for the rides affected or code them as "barn cancels" and make those rides up when the horse is back to work. If you are leasing a horse for the purpose of being able to show off the property and an injury or illness keeps that horse from going to a show, you will not attend the show. Last minute horse substitutions are not an option. You must have 60 days/24 rides on the same horse before qualifying for off-property horse shows. You do have the option of changing your horse choice mid-lease, however thirty days notice is required to end the lease agreement if an end-date is not listed on the signed lease agreement.

Absences

If you will be absent from any of your weekly rides the same policy for lessons applies: 24 hours notice is required for a make-up to be available and you are allowed one absence per lesson / lease ride per month. Early or multiple make ups for a lesson or lease ride in a month are not available. Remember to leave a message on the barn phone to assure that the absence is recorded on the lesson pages. (844-2088)

Leasing Options

Third Lease

A third lease consists of three rides a week: two lessons and one lease/practice ride on the flat. All three weekly rides will be set on the lesson schedule.

Half Lease

A half lease consists of four rides a week: two lessons and two lease rides (one on the flat/one over fences). All four weekly rides will be set on the lesson schedule.

Full Lease

A full lease is a comprehensive lease of a SOEC horse. Participation in the SOEC lesson program is required. The lessee will be responsible for all veterinary and farrier expenses incurred during the lease term.

Frequently Asked Questions

May I drop my child at the barn to visit the horses when he/she is not in a lesson?

Lesson student children may not be left at the barn without parental supervision unless they are participating in a scheduled lesson or a chaperoned 4H event.

How many lessons is my child required to take each month?

Enrollment in the lesson program consists of a minimum of four regularly scheduled group lessons per month. This structure enables the rider to progress in skill and the barn to budget successfully to meet financial obligations.

Can my child take additional lessons?

Once enrolled in a group lesson, students using school horses may add additional group lessons or private or semi-private lessons to compliment their current lesson.

How quickly will my child move out of “Introduction to the Horse” into the Maiden Rider arena?

Age, strength, large motor and fine motor abilities, focus, and personality play a large part in each child’s unique journey. Each trainer works hard to allow your child’s skill as a rider to safely unfold in a way that creates a happy, confident, competent horse enthusiast.

Will my child advance faster with additional weekly lessons?

In most cases, when more effort is put into an activity, results come quicker. With horse back riding, this is especially true. The muscle control that is needed to ride effectively develops with each additional ride.

Is an enrollment deposit required?

Initial enrollment in the lesson program requires a down payment of one months lesson fees. This payment is your Security Deposit Balance. This deposit is fully refundable with two-week written notice of withdrawal. Your deposit is then applied to your final lessons, covering your final bill. If there is an additional credit balance, it will be refunded to you by check.

Can my child make up a lesson if she is absent?

A student receives a make-up lesson for one missed class each month. Make-ups for additional absences in a month are not available. (Exception – when the barn cancels a lesson, you always receive a make-up, even if you have already used your one absence for the month.)

How much notice must I give the barn if my child will be absent?

Any time your child will be absent, a minimum of 24 hours notice is required. When the barn receives proper notice, your child will receive a make-up for the missed lesson. (Remember, however, that a student may only make-up one missed lesson each month.)

What if my child is sick and I cannot give 24 hours notice?

Although this may seem inflexible when illnesses are involved, 24 hours notice is necessary to give the barn time to schedule another student for a make-up lesson in the open lesson slot.

What happens if I do not give 24 hours notice or my child accidentally misses a lesson?

Late cancellations or ‘no shows’ are billed just as if the student had taken the lesson.

Do I receive a make-up lesson if the instructor cancels a lesson due to inclement weather or other reasons?

Any time the barn cancels a lesson, the students in that lesson will receive a make-up – even if they have already had an absence in the same month.

How long do I have to make-up a missed lesson?

Make-up lessons remain on the books for three months. After that time, they will expire and be removed. Consult with your child's instructor to schedule make-up lessons within the three month time frame.

Who schedules make-up lessons for my child?

Parents are asked to keep track of their child's make-up lessons. Available make-ups are listed on the monthly barn bill. To schedule a make-up, please discuss options with your child's trainer.

How do I make sure I'm not billed for an extra lesson when I am using a make-up lesson date?

Be sure to record any make-up lesson as MU on the lesson page. Also include the date of the absence. Use the column on the right hand side of the lesson page to record this information.

What is the best way to record an upcoming absence?

Please do not expect your instructor to remember upcoming absences. Write future absences down on the corresponding lesson page or on a note left on the office desk or in your trainer's mailbox.

How do I know if a lesson is cancelled due to inclement weather?

If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, the outgoing message on the office answering machine will be changed to announce the cancellation. Unless or until the outgoing message has been changed, assume lessons will be held as scheduled.

It seems to take a long time to receive weather related cancellations. Why?

Lessons are not cancelled due to light rain, drizzle, or the threat of inclement weather. Storms sometimes pop up at the last minute or pass quickly. If lessons are cancelled too early in the day, the weather may clear up and we have missed an opportunity to hold lessons. Although this may seem like an inconvenience, it is one facet of participating in an outdoor sport. When in doubt – come on out and prepare to ride! Lessons will be held if at all possible.

Are opportunities available for students to participate in horse shows?

Southern Oak Equestrian Center offers schooling show opportunities several times each year. Students are welcome to register to participate in these fun-filled days.

Can my child participate in horse shows at other barns?

Students who are interested in showing off the property are required to build a relationship with one horse through our leasing program. The student must ride the same horse for 24 rides before leaving the property. The student may also be required to participate in clinics to prepare them for their show experience.

How can I get more involved in the 4H Club?

If you are interested in learning even more about horses while making new friends, the Hi Ho Hunters 4H Club provides regular learning and social opportunities. Focused on service, social, and educational activities, the club meets regularly to help members connect with other horse-minded friends as they develop new horse-related skills. To join, simply ask your trainer for additional information. All lesson students are welcome!

Around the Barn

To keep horses, riders, trainers, and guests safe and comfortable while at the barn, please remember to always:

- Wear a properly fitting safety helmet when mounted.
- Wear shoes that protect your feet when working around the horses.
- Ride only in the company of others.
- Use a lead rope when leading a horse.
- Tie horses to proper objects only (not to stall poles, grates, etc.)
- Walk around the barn area and to and from the ring whether on foot or mounted on your horse.
- Behave calmly. Do not run or yell.
- Mount and dismount in the open, never while under a roof.
- Bring treats for the horses in paper – not plastic – bags. Swallowing a plastic bag can cause a horse to become seriously ill and colic.
- Leave bicycles and scooters home.
- Pick up any mess your horse leaves behind. (Muck tubs/pitch forks can be found near the barn.)
- Return all barn items to proper place before leaving.
- Be helpful to others.
- Cooperate with your trainer.
- Be polite and courteous.

Release of Liability Form is Required for Every Rider

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Release and Hold Harmless Agreement

Warning:

Under North Carolina State Law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to, or the death of, a participant in equine activities resulting exclusively from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Chapter 99E of the North Carolina General Statutes

Furthermore:

The Undersigned recognizes and assumes the unavoidable risk inherent in all horse-related activities, including, but not limited to bodily injury and death, as well as physical harm for horse, rider, and spectator.

In consideration, therefore, for the privilege of riding and/or working around horses at Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC, the Undersigned does hereby agree to hold harmless and indemnify Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC, and any of its agents, representatives, employees, or instructors.

Furthermore, this form releases Southern Oak Equestrian Center, LLC, its agents, representatives, employees, and instructors from any liability or responsibility for accident, damage, injury, or illness to the Undersigned or to any horse owned by the Undersigned or to any family member or spectator accompanying the Undersigned on the premises.

Print Student's Name: _____

Print Student's Name: _____

Print Parent's Name(s): _____

Complete Address: _____

Home Telephone #: _____

Alternate Telephone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Date: _____