

Guidance for Pony Club Activities under COVID-19 restrictions

Rallies, Training and Competitions (Updated 24th July 2020)



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There is no obligation for any Branch or Centre to be putting on activities that they are not comfortable with. Each one is different and will be in a different place for adapting to new measures, particularly as much of the country is still in very heavy restrictions.

As always, we need to use our common sense to interpret the Government easing measures. Our priority always has to be the safety of our members, volunteers and families. This guidance is to help support Branches and Centres resume activity safely, following Government guidance and within Government restrictions.



General Principles

- 1** The health and safety of Pony Club Members, families and volunteers is the overriding priority for everyone to consider. (Pony Club Rule 1.11, 1.12)
- 2** Anyone attending a Pony Club activity must comply with Government guidelines, including local variations where applicable. (Pony Club Rule 1.8)
- 3** All training and competition organisers must complete a COVID-19 Risk Assessment in advance to manage risks and provide a safe, controlled and regulated environment for all involved. In addition, the usual event-specific risk assessments must also be completed.
- 4** Regular handwashing, cleaning and hygiene procedures are essential for all activities.
- 5** Social distancing of two metres should be maintained where possible; if this is not possible, individuals are advised to remain at least one metre apart, plus other mitigating measures.

- 6 For activity to successfully resume, these principles must be complied with, in a spirit of understanding and support for the organisers and everyone involved.

Where applicable, competitions should be run according to the National Governing Body organiser guidance, for example that used by British Dressage, British Eventing or British Showjumping.



Rallies and Training

In much of the UK, the “gatherings” of up to 6 people restriction is still in place in addition to social distancing. As part of the risk assessment to enable the activity to run, the gathering restriction of 6 needs to inform all considerations of how members arrive, park, unload and get to the arena and how they leave.

At any point, there should only be a maximum of 6 people in a gathering. Following the latest easing of restrictions in England, The Pony Club Guidance for England and Northern Ireland allows for multiple gatherings of 6 where this can be safely managed – for example two rallies running concurrently in a large field.

Examples of how this might work practically are:

- Maximum group size of 6 to include the instructor: for example; a group of 4 riders, one coach and branch official/safeguarding officer in one arena.
- Minimise numbers on site:
 - We expect only one person from the same household to be transporting their child to training. This person can unload, assist tack up, rider getting onto the pony etc. but should then keep away from the arena and maintain social distancing.
 - Other siblings and family members that are not involved in the lesson should not attend if possible.
 - Allow time for groups to assemble and disperse.
- Parking: Parking should have 5-10m spaces.
- PPE: masks are not compulsory if social distancing is maintained but can be worn. It is not recommended that riders wear masks. See [Appendix 1 face mask guidance](#) from The Pony Club Medical Advisor, Dr Ted Adams.
- Don't feel under pressure to put things on that are difficult or could become unsafe. Remember if a photo was taken at any time, would it be socially acceptable? (i.e. would you see people not socially distanced or a gathering of more than 6 people?)





Competitions

Sport-specific guidance for running a competition under COVID-19 restrictions from a National Governing Body should be followed where applicable (Dressage, Endurance, Eventing, Polo, Polocrosse, Pony Racing and Show Jumping all have British governing bodies.)

General considerations for running a Pony Club Competition:

- Follow National Governing Body guidance
- Undertake [COVID-19 Risk Assessment](#) **in addition** to usual event [risk assessments](#)
- Everyone on site must adhere to Government guidance on social distancing
- Minimise people on site – no non-essential people
- Competitors to complete their event and leave as quickly as possible
- It is likely that any competition will come under scrutiny from local enforcement agencies - this must be communicated to members, their families and volunteers

Pre-event

- COVID-19 risk assessment and event risk assessment completed
- Entries made online (to include name of competitor and any accompanying people)
- [Numbers printed off by entrant](#) at home if applicable
- Support team for rider limited to 1xRider and an additional 1xSupport per horse if required
- To minimise interaction on the day, request evidence of vaccination in advance. Hat and body protector compliance may also be provided in advance, or checked on arrival through the window of the vehicle.
- Virtual briefing of all stewards and officials before event
- Suggest pegging out parking 5-10m to minimise steward interaction on the day
- No 'secretary' at event so all info needs to have been communicated in advance including site plan
- Set up WhatsApp group of all officials etc for instant communication
- Timetabling: example timings to minimise gathering of competitors
 - Dressage – additional 1-3 minutes between tests (3 minutes if judge writing scores only and collective comments at end)
 - Showjumping – 2-3 minutes between competitors
 - Cross Country – 2-3 minutes between competitors

On Event

- Clear signage declaring that this is a regulated area and everyone on site must comply. Clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene
- Entrance Steward: You will need a confident adult with charm and power of command!

- Take rider's name at gate, listed alphabetically for speed, and check list for all attendees – do not allow any extras: (1) limiting total numbers attending and (2) accountability required for 'track and trace' in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Lorry / trailer parking: 10m between lorries if tying up both sides, 5m between if tying up on one side, 3m between if no tying up outside
- Medical cover provided in accordance with Health and Safety Rulebook – Medical staff to provide their own PPE
- Handwashing / sanitising and toilet facilities provided and cleaned as required in local guidance. Encourage people to bring/use their own toilets in their lorries/trailers.
- Refreshment and trade stands must employ strict social distancing measures, e.g. protective screen, queuing managed at 2m, no cash handling if possible, disposable everything, good bins
- Event information: no on-site event office or secretary, an optional information point can be provided to summon assistance (farrier, vet etc)
- Passport and vaccination checks may be carried out at random; volunteers and competitors to be protected by appropriate PPE / screens
- Volunteers may wish to provide their own PPE, food and equipment (clipboard, pens, whistles etc)
- All competitors must take responsibility for competing at their allocated time
- One-way system through the rings/arenas leading to a minimum of 'close encounters'
- Spectating: Parent/Guardian may watch their own rider but not gather in any groups
- Prize giving: rosettes and prizes posted or sent by email. E-vouchers and e-rosettes make an excellent prize

Post Event

- Scores and results posted online
- No prize giving - any rosettes or prizes can be collected or posted later
- Score sheets etc may be posted, suggest competitor leaves a stamped, addressed envelope



Examples of sport-specific guidance



Dressage

- Minimise number of Arena Stewards
- Warm up: allow 15mx15m per horse, no coaches in warm up. Organiser to state maximum number in warm up area (eg: maximum 4 in a 60mx20m)
- Dressage Judges: plan for judge being on their own, they will write score for each movement and collectives and will make comments only for collectives. Judge may have writer from their own household in the car. Following latest change to social distancing to 1m, it may be possible for a judge and writer to share a box if suitable social distancing and other mitigating precautions are

possible.

- Minimise handling of score sheets – scorer to collect dressage sheet from judge, no second scorer for double-checking.
- If dressage phase of event, scores can be passed to main scorer via radio, phone, live scoring or batch of scores photographed on mobile and email/text/message to scorer. Try to avoid hand delivering where possible.



Show Jumping

- Limit numbers in any exercise, pre-warm up area used. This area should have no poles and no additional people.
- Warm up steward to control access to warm up
- Warm up: allow 15mx15m per horse, no coaches in warm up. Organiser to state maximum number in warm up area (eg: maximum 4 in a 60mx20m)
- Fence Steward to be provided by organiser to keep number in warm up arena below gathering of 6
- No spectators in warm up area
- Course plan posted online or on large boards on site
- Course walking: timetable in course walks
- Arena Party / course designer to have appropriate PPE and social distancing measures
- One judge in a box or 2 from same household, commentary not mandatory - following latest change to social distancing to 1m, it may be possible for two judges to share a box if suitable social distancing and other mitigating precautions are possible.
- If show jumping phase of event, judging sheet can be photographed and email/text/message to the event scorer
- In the ring: one competitor and one or two pole pickers
- In the holding area for next competitor: one and one steward
- Timing: allow each competitor 12 mins in exercise area, 12minutes in warm up, 3 mins in holding, 3 mins in the Ring



Cross Country

- Warm up steward to control access to warm up
- Warm up: allow 15mx15m per horse, no coaches in warm up. Organiser to state maximum number in warm up area (eg: maximum 4 in a 60mx20m)
- Course plan posted online or on large boards on site
- Timekeeper, Starter and Control as needed - commentary not mandatory
- Jump judges - no mass briefings, suggest an online briefing if possible (BE producing a briefing video)
- Suggest handling of fence judge slips is avoided – radios can be used to relay scores to master score sheet

It is essential that current Government guidelines during the Covid 19 Pandemic around social distancing, are strictly adhered to for the successful continuation of Pony Club activities.



Online Activities

Online learning is becoming the new normal and as we become more adept at using the range of platforms available, we need to remember our safeguarding training, the security of the platform and any age restrictions in place.

Please ensure you are not communicating with young people if they are not of the correct age to use a platform, it is vital that parents or guardians are informed of all communication taking place, to protect both parties. Standard Safeguarding practice is that no adult should be having direct private contact with U18s. Contact from Area Reps, DCs, Proprietors and Coaches should be made to the parent. Please also note that WhatsApp has a minimum age of 16 and displays users' numbers.

Appendix 1



Human face mask use at Pony Club activities

(16th June 2020, Dr Ted Adams)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to public health advice being given to the public and to health care professionals to wear face masks or coverings in some circumstances in public to reduce the risk of virus transmission from the wearer.

Public health advice

The Government's advice can be found [here](#). The pertinent section states:

If you can, you should also wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas.

The underlying science on which this is based is described as "heterogeneous and somewhat sparse" and the precautionary principle of reducing risk to others is the agreed principle on which this is based.

Principles for face covering use at Pony Club events

- Only be used in an attempt to reduce the risk of virus transmission
- Only be used when unmounted
- Only be used when the risk of virus transmission exceeds the risks of wearing a face covering.

Situations where this advice may be applicable to Pony Club activities

All Pony Club activities that are currently recommended by The Pony Club take place outside where the risk of virus transmission is the lowest. It is also unlikely that in the main members, their parents or guardians and coaches will have to be in close proximity of each other for more than 15 minutes.

Members

Members who wish to use face coverings may use them when unmounted. Care should be taken that they are always safely secured and cannot be easily removed or dislodged. Face coverings may cause alarm to horses or ponies if they are unsecure, brightly coloured or in any way distract members from the care and attention they must give to the activity they are undertaking.

No face coverings should be used when mounted as the risk of a face covering being dislodged or becoming a hazard outweigh the risk of virus transmission.

Coaches, Officials, Parents and Guardians

May wish to use a face covering if they are concerned about persistent proximity to members. Use of a face covering may affect the effectiveness of instructions and therefore safety of the members who are

under instruction. The Pony Club would suggest that if individuals do wish to use face coverings, they use them intermittently with regular handwashing.

First aiders

The Pony Club values the work that our volunteer first aiders provide. We would direct our volunteers to advice from the [Resuscitation Council](#) and [Public Health England](#), which can be found by clicking the links in this paragraph.

The decision whether to provide mouth to mouth resuscitation and / or cardiac chest compressions has to be made in the light of the evidence that you are presented with at the time. The Pony Club will support your reasonable decision as to the level of care you provide to individuals and to the personal precautions you wish to take in fulfilling your role. Most first aiders will be presented with the most common injuries and scenarios and your personal precautions would reasonably be based on these. The principle of ensuring you ask for help early in situations for which you need help is still the primary duty of a first aider.

References

Greenhalgh T, Schmid M, Czypionka T, Bassler D, Gruer L Face masks for the public during the covid-19 crisis BMJ 2020;369:m1435