

Camp



Camp is usually the highlight of the year. It can be expensive to run and some Branches / Centres subsidise the cost to their Members by using funds raised through their competitions and activities. It is a special time when Members can really progress in their riding and develop new skills both on and off their ponies. As Members have to work in groups all week, they learn life skills. For some Members it is the first time that they have stayed away from home for several nights. Camp can take many forms.

- Senior Residential Camp is usually for children staying at one venue for 5 + days. The ponies are stabled and the children live in a hostel, caravans, tents or a barn with on-site catering. It is probably best to restrict attendance to those Members who are over 11 years old.
- Junior (Day) Camp is for younger Members, children arrive each morning bring a packed lunch and leave each afternoon. The ponies stay for the duration of camp.
- Mini Camp is for the very young Member often on a lead rein. This group have special needs. 'Short and sweet' is often the best advice, so plan for three days in a safe, quiet environment. Minis have a short concentration-span, soon tire and miss Mum very quickly.

Many of the older Members, age 16+, prefer a completely different format. A short residential 3-5 day clinic is popular with a specialist instructor, at a different time from main camp. Here they appreciate being treated as students and relish non participation in the tack cleaning and stable marking routines, so much an important part of residential camp for the younger Members.

Some Branches have a massive combined residential camp for the whole branch, some run for 7 days. Whatever you choose, careful planning is important if camp is to run smoothly. Camp should be rewarding and fun for all. Try to schedule a little free time too.

Venues and Facilities

Racecourses, show-grounds, farms and Equine Colleges of Further Education are popular venues. Ideal facilities include:

- Dressage arenas.
- A full set of show jumps.
- A course with a variety of XC jumps.
- An enclosed flat area for other activities.
- Stabling either temporary or permanent with an adequate supply of water from hose or stand pipe. Temporary stabling is becoming more difficult to obtain, can be expensive and needs to be booked early.
- A clean, safe catering area.
- Lavatories, hand washing facilities and good showers.
- Safe trailer/lorry parking ideally adjacent to the stables as Members may need to use their trailers to store their hard feed/grooming/ tack cleaning and mucking out equipment
- Space for hay and bedding.
- Ideally lockable tack room/s

- A clean, safe eating area where evening activities can take place

All camps vary. Each day needs careful planning and advance preparation. Every stable should be clearly labelled with the Member's name before their arrival at camp. A large notice board in a prominent position keeps everybody informed of activities, programme changes etc. It is important that a 'stable routine' timetable operates so that all Members muck-out and feed their ponies at the same times during the day. Likewise a timetable for Members ensures that everyone is in the right place at the right time for meals and other activities. Schedule regular periods of relaxation during the week, swimming and ten-pin bowling provide off-site interest and during the evening talks, demonstrations and games are appreciated. They need some time to crash out and do nothing too.

Suggested Planning for a Summer Holiday Camp

Following on from the previous annual camp, arrange a wash-up meeting with the main camp officials and the Chief Instructor to discuss the camp. Besides noting the high points, identify weaker areas that could be improved. Evaluate the performance of every instructor and decide who you would like to invite back. Assuming it was satisfactory; re-book the venue immediately after the previous camp along with temporary stables and other essential items. Re-book the caterer if used.

Book key instructors early, those individuals capable of teaching to a high standard and who make the whole experience enjoyable, are in great demand. Always look after your special instructors they are worth their weight in gold.

At the first Autumn Committee meeting decide the following year's camp date(s) and publish them on the website and in the next newsletter. Invite key helpers to assist again. Once the camp financial report is to hand, try to set the charges for the next year. It is helpful for parents to have this information as early as possible because they have their own family holidays to arrange along with other siblings' activities to consider.

At the beginning of the summer term send out a camp booking form along with a letter giving general information regarding camp. Remind Members about pony vaccination requirements in good time. Complete any basic work at the venue and check that all invited assistants are still available for the week. Members' applications should close by early May to allow time to make last minute changes to plans. Acknowledge all applications in order of receipt and send out acceptance letters along with detailed camp information, to all successful applicants. Keep a waiting list.

Camp Personnel

a) Pastoral care

Possibly the DC or the Assistant DC or a mature female person whose children have been at camp before, usually resident and responsible for the general discipline, rules, child protection, catering and all the domestic aspects of camp life. This person may be responsible for the petty cash, pocket money and the sale of confectionery etc. They must obtain an enhanced disclosure check (DBS, PVG or Access NI). Many camps have two or three people who take turns to stay and share this role. It is good practice to insist that all residential adults should have a valid First Aid Certificate. All people staying overnight **must** be disclosure checked (DBS, PVG or Access NI). All those helping out during the day unsupervised need to be disclosure checked also.

A responsible person must be 'on duty' at all times whilst the camp is running. There must always be a Qualified First Aider present. Assistant(s) may be assigned specific roles e.g. First Aid, Health

and Safety and Secretary / Admin. The local GP practice and Vet should be informed of camp dates, in case of any emergency.

The Chief Instructor

In consultation with the DC, the Chief Instructor appoints the other coaches for camp, one coach per ride, and prepares an instruction time-table. Alongside the DC, the Chief Instructor confirms that the Risk Assessment has been completed and signed off.

It is usual for the Chief Instructor to have had a pre-camp meeting with all the coaches to discuss camp activities. On the first morning, before the rides gather together, it is helpful to call an early briefing meeting of all coaches in case last minute changes have had to be made.

Other responsibilities include:

- Booking speakers
- Setting out flatwork arenas
- Allocating instructors to rides
- Dividing Members into groups of mixed ages for all other activities.
- Ensuring that accident report forms are available.
- Planning in case of bad weather.
- Preparing ride sheets for each instructor with relevant details of Members and ponies so that progress/problems can be recorded.
- If there are sufficient instructors the CI can act as a floating instructor and cover for delays / accidents / injuries, as well as give specialist or remedial help where necessary.

Stable Manager

Reports to the Chief Instructor and is responsible for all stabling arrangements. He / she manages the supply of hay and bedding, muck heap, mucking out and all safety precautions. He / she checks the health and well being of all the animals in the stables and in consultation with Chief Instructor calls the vet if necessary. He / she has a veterinary first aid kit and the camp farrier's phone number. He / she may need DIY skills on temporary stables! This person may be paid, possibly use a Branch Member who has passed their 'A' Care test.

Night Watch-people

Besides the pastoral care organiser and others who are in residence, a minimum of 3 people should be on hand every evening to patrol after lights out and ensure that the campers are safe. Ideally a male and two females should make up this group. A patrol should be made up of two people, never the male on his own. The group should stay all night and take turns to patrol the site at regular intervals throughout the night. This responsibility could be shared by a group of reliable parents on a rota for the duration of camp.

Senior Pony Club Members and Others

Enthusiastic people who can come in and help to organise games and other activities for Members once the riding has ended. People who can help deliver essential equipment to the venue before and return it at the end of camp. Friendly parents to welcome new Members on arrival show them the ropes and help them to settle in.

Caterers

They are a very important part of camp. At colleges, some camps can book the term-time catering staff for their week. Others are able to import their own team of people to provide the food from a kitchen provided on site. The food may be prepared on site or delivered each day by parents according to a pre-determined menu. It is important that all caterers have and are aware of the appropriate hygiene certificates / standards necessary to store, prepare and serve food at camp. The camp kitchen is an important area to include in the camp risk assessment. Camps of two weeks duration may be visited by the local authority health and safety representative who may wish to review catering standards.

Bring the following equipment with you:

(1) For the stable

- Mucking out fork, shovel, broom, wheel-barrow or plastic sheet to cart muck to the muck heap.
- Complete grooming kit, head collar and rope,
- Complete set of clean tack, girth, numnah(s), rugs, boots,
- Water bucket, feed bucket and hay-net.
- Tack cleaning kit, plaiting kit, tail bandage, stable bandages and fibergee

(2) Feed for your pony / horse

- Bring enough of your own hard feed for the week. If you do not usually give hard feed ask us for advice beforehand.
- Feed scoop

(3) Personal

- 2/3 pairs jodhpurs, jodhpur boots, hacking jacket, tagged riding hat, 2/3 shirts, Pony Club tie or stock, hair nets, Pony Club badge, whip, Branch sweat shirt/s, waterproof riding mac, chaps, shoe cleaning kit, medical armband.
- Shorts / jeans, tee-shirts, trainers for wearing after riding has ended, warm sweaters, waterproof jacket, underwear and socks.
- Wellies and old clothes for mucking out.
- Swimming gear.
- Pyjamas, wash-bag with toothbrush/paste, soap, sponge, towels etc.
- Pillow(s), sleeping bag, additional blankets in case of cold.
- Pony Club Manual, notebook, pens.
- Label all equipment.
- Declare all medication on arrival.

Tidiness

Campers are expected to keep their stable and sleeping area clean and tidy. Members will be expected to carry out light domestic duties during the week.

Leave

No Member may leave the camp without the recorded permission of the DC or camp organiser.

Pocket Money / Valuables

A small amount of pocket money may be brought to buy sweets and soft drinks. Mobile phones, arrangements have been made for them to be left with --- Members will be allowed to use them at certain times. Please do not send your child to camp with items of value because the Branch is not liable for any personal loss or any damage incurred.

Alcohol / Smoking

No Member is allowed to consume alcohol or smoke during camp.

Welfare

Members should tell their coach or the camp organiser if they feel unwell, unhappy or have been injured / bullied.

Parents

All parents are welcome to visit camp from 2 pm on the Friday afternoon to watch the final ride. At other times visits are allowed after the afternoon session riding has ended but before supper. Once the final Friday afternoon ride has finished all Members must return their ponies to their stables and assemble for tea and prize giving in the Milton Bar. After prize-giving has finished the Members are dismissed and **you** are responsible for your child again. Ensure that personal equipment is removed from the site and that your stable is left clean and tidy.

NB: Parent(s) if you are planning to be away on holiday during camp week you must complete and sign a pro-forma and return it to the DC before camp starts. The secretary has copies of this form. Please do not do your child's camp jobs whilst visiting. It is an important aspect of camp for all Members to learn to muck-out, muck-in, clean tack and help themselves and each other with supervision.

If your child is a vegetarian has a special medical or dietary requirement please make sure that you tell us well beforehand.