



## Muster Information for Parents

### MUSTER FORMAT

At most musters there will generally be 2 sessions of approximately 1 hour each, before a 30-45 minute break for 'lunch', followed by a lecture or demonstration, and then a 3<sup>rd</sup> 1 hour session. Group 6 riders will usually join in with Group 5 riders if they want to participate in the third ridden session, unless there is sufficient demand and instructor availability on the day for a separate group.

In summer the muster will run from 8am to 1pm, and in winter from 9am to 2pm. At some musters the day may end after the lecture and the morning may involve more specific competition training or fun activities. We may also include some 'twilight musters' during the hot months of the year. Parents will be notified of these arrangements ahead of time.

The sessions are usually ridden, but will sometimes incorporate unmounted practical horsemanship or theory. These unmounted sessions are an integral part of the Pony Club syllabus and ensure that the riders are progressively working towards their Proficiency Certificates as well as learning how to look after and care for their horse.

### Set Up

Setting up gear for the day will start approximately half an hour before the muster starts. It is the responsibility of all those who wish to participate in the day (excepting parents in charge of a Group 6 rider or child/horse requiring their full attention). An instructor will be available to direct set up activities, but parents should bear in mind that the Instructors will be volunteering their time all morning, and should not also be expected to set up and pack up equipment.

### Muster start

Musters commence with welcome and announcements at 8:00am in summer and 9:00am in winter (check the website Calendar for dates). All riders are to assemble in their riding groups at the Top Flat in front of the clubhouse five minutes before muster commences. Riders should arrange themselves into lines facing the clubhouse.

Riders are usually then moved off in their groups according to the timetable. The first 10 minutes involves a gear check and recording of attendance and presentation points (see the SGVPC website for more information about how presentation points are awarded). After this there will be a warm-up for 15 minutes, and then the first session will commence.

Groups will rotate between those Instructors present, according to the muster plan for the day. Riders are not to move between groups unless this has been arranged with the Chief Instructor.

### Late arrivals

Riders who are late will be gear checked by their group instructor, and their attendance recorded. However, late arrivals will incur a penalty to muster presentation points.

## **Breaks**

Hot and cold food may be purchased from the canteen at lunch break. There will also be a short drink/toilet break between the first and second session. Parents may also like to bring a water bottle so that their child may have more frequent drinks on hot days. Sunscreen is provided and is available at the canteen.

## **Lunch**

During lunch horses should be tied up safely, with saddles and bridles removed, and made comfortable. If you're unsure of the correct length or knots to use when tying up please ask your instructors. Please ensure that you bring your own water buckets.

Exercise boots should be removed during breaks as they retain heat on the horse's legs. If for any reason a saddle is to be left on a horse during breaks, then the girth should be loosened by 2-4 holes (but not so loose that the saddle swings around the horse's belly). Don't forget to do it up again before mounting!

## **Pack Up**

Packing up is also the responsibility of those using the gear. Again, no instructor should have to do this job. No rider should leave the grounds until all the equipment has been packed away and the grounds left tidy, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Chief Instructor.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Attendance**

Attendance means that you must participate in the muster for the full day (unless you are a Group 6 rider finishing after the 2nd session) and assist with pack up at the end of the day. We understand that on the odd occasion there may be some other pressing engagement for you to attend so in these circumstances please see the Chief Instructor.

### **Non-Riding Attendance**

There will be times when a member has no mount for the Muster day. Attendance will only be marked off for that day if you attend the Muster Day in full Pony Club muster uniform in time for your attendance to be recorded, and stay for the full muster participating and assisting with your group. You will also be required to assist with pack up at the end of the day.

### **Parking**

Floats and cars carrying horse equipment can park behind the stable area, or out on the Cross Country course. All other cars are asked to park by the road in front of the clubhouse.

### **Parental Supervision at Muster Days**

An adult family member should be present at any Muster day when their child, under the age of 16, is taking part. If for any reason a parent is unable to stay for the full muster, the Chief Instructor must be informed and the name of a nominated guardian, who will be on the grounds, must be placed in the relevant book and be signed by both the parent and guardian.

### **New Members at Musters**

When arriving at Pony Club for the first time please introduce yourself to the Chief Instructor 15 minutes before muster starts. You will be shown the facilities and placed into a muster group for the day, which may be altered for subsequent musters. You do not need to have muster uniform for your first day but you will be expected to purchase the uniform at your earliest convenience.

## **What to Wear at a Muster**

SGVPC polo shirt, fawn or green jodhpurs (most members wear fawn) or bone stockman cut trousers, short jodhpur boots or top boots or gaiters with matching boots (with smooth or slightly textured sole) and a black or white AS/NZ 3838, EN1384 or ASTM F1163 helmet. Horses should be wearing a SGVPC saddlecloth. Shirts and saddlecloths are available for sale from our uniform officer.

Jewellery – Necklace and bracelet only allowed under shirt. Rings only allowed under gloves. Only sleepers or stud earrings (or that size and style) allowed.

## **How Members are Graded**

Riding members will be allocated to a group according to their riding ability, as well as their progression through the Pony Club Syllabus (see “Proficiency Certificates” below).

## **Proficiency Certificates**

Pony Club provides an opportunity for riders to increase their knowledge and skills about horses and horsemanship through a series of practical & theoretical tests & certificates. These tests start fairly simply with D certificate, the first level which even children as young as 7 can participate in.

The certificates are not compulsory, but highly recommended for members wishing to have their skills recognized. Although only junior and associate members (under 26 years) are able to sit for the tests, senior members are encouraged to participate in the learning of these skills. Tests will be held early in the year for members wanting to ride at State competitions, and towards the end of the year as a means of measuring progress.

When members have passed their test they will be presented with a certificate and a badge, which may be sewn onto their uniforms. These can be placed on muster shirts.

It is recommended that all riders obtain the certificate workbooks appropriate to their stage of riding. Riders should work through their workbooks at home, and should also bring them along to musters to be signed off by the Chief Instructor as they complete each section. It is also recommended that riders purchase a Pony Club text book, which will assist in completing certificate work at home, as well as being a valuable reference for riding and caring for their horse or pony.

To obtain workbooks and reference books, speak to the Chief Instructor. Other excellent books can be purchased directly from PCAQ (see the PCAQ website for ordering information).

## **INSTRUCTORS**

SGVPC is fortunate to have a number of people who have offered their time and effort to train as Pony Club instructors. This is vital for the future of the club as without qualified instructors there will be no Pony Club. A trainee instructor will always be accompanied by a qualified instructor, but must have the opportunity to practice their coaching skills during musters. All trainee instructors should be made to feel encouraged and supported by the club; that means by parents and riders.

Respect should always be given to the instructors and trainee instructors. They are all volunteers & are there to help you and your children with their riding and in learning to care for their horses.

At no time are instructors, or trainee instructors, to be interrupted or contradicted during a lesson. This includes visiting instructors. If you have a question or problem see a committee member or the Chief Instructor at an appropriate time (eg lunch break) and they will do their best to solve your problem.

## CLUB RULES

Refer to the SGVPC "*Club Rules and Policies*" for the full list of rules including use of the club facilities, safety, working bees, canteen duties, parental obligations and code of behaviour:

<http://www.samfordgvyponyclub.org.au/forms/2012-sgvpc-rules-and-policies.pdf>

The club will not tolerate harassment, aggressive behaviour or verbal abuse of any kind. Disciplinary action could result in suspension or termination of membership.

For more information see the PCAQ Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy:

<http://www.pcaq.asn.au/Policies/pcaq%20codes%20of%20behaviour.pdf>

<http://www.pcaq.asn.au/Policies/pcaq%20anti-harrassment%20%20policy.pdf>

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***Please Remember:***

***Most riders, in particular children, participate in Pony Club for fun.***

***They are not taking part just to win nor are they participating for the entertainment and pleasure of you and spectators.***

**AND**

***It is a condition of entry to any Pony Club event or venue that you agree to abide by the Pony Club Codes of Behaviour.***

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