

Pony Club NSW Members' Handbook

*The Pony Club Association of
New South Wales Inc*



*Information for New Members
and Parents*

www.pcansw.org.au

Welcome to Pony Club NSW



Dear New Member's Family,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome your entire family into the Pony Club Association of NSW.

You have taken a step that will change your lives! And that means all family members, as Pony Club is definitely family orientated.

You will be offered a wide variety of activities and experiences during Pony Club, from local Club rally days right through to International competition.

Pony Club is a volunteer organisation and relies heavily on parents as the source of help and support. We ask you to help in such a way as to give the opportunity for the children to learn leadership skills, teamwork, responsibility, and independence – all in an age appropriate and safe environment.

I urge you and your family to take advantage of the many opportunities to learn not only horsemanship, but horse mastership as well – including the care and management of the horse, and the many varied activities in which they can participate, both mounted and unmounted.

Your Club committee, Chief Instructor and fellow club members can help to guide you wisely, so do take full advantage of their experience and knowledge.

We like to keep everyone informed about what is going on in Pony Club. This is achieved through the quarterly electronic distribution of the **State Newsletter**, monthly updates emailed in to you in **Pon-E-News** and an up to date website. In addition, other resources are available from the State Office, including '**Riding**' – an instructional manual for riding and horsemanship.

This information booklet is designed to help you maximize your Pony Club experience. It can be daunting entering a new association, but we hope to set your mind at ease. Inside this booklet you will find information on all the different activities at Pony Club and the opportunities on offer.

I welcome you with an open heart, and hope to meet you and your family at a Pony Club activity in the near future.

Sincerely,

Dianne Cullen
President of Pony Club Association of NSW Inc

What is Pony Club?

Pony Club is a recognised youth organisation for those interested in horses, ponies and riding and is the largest association of riders in the world.

The Pony Club Association of New South Wales is the controlling body for Pony Clubs in New South Wales, where young people can ride and learn all disciplines of equestrian sports. The Association co-ordinates, develops and promotes Pony Club in New South Wales and is committed to providing a high standard of instruction for its members.

Pony Club is a voluntary youth organisation which exists to promote the physical, mental and spiritual development of young people, encouraging in them an awareness of sportsmanship and citizenship, assisting them to gain knowledge and become proficient in their chosen sport.

Objects of Pony Club NSW:

- To encourage young people to ride and learn to enjoy all kinds of sport connected with horses and riding;
- To provide instruction on riding and horsemanship and to instill in the members the proper care of their animals;
- To promote the highest ideals of sportsmanship, citizenship and loyalty, thereby cultivating strength of character and self-discipline.



What Does Pony Club Involve?

RALLY DAYS:

Mounted Rally Days

Are held at regular intervals (usually once or twice a month) at which riders receive instruction on riding and caring for their horse or pony. These rallies are run by voluntary instructors and are the backbone of the movement.

Rally days can vary between days and across clubs. They can include, but not limited to, instruction in dressage, jumping, sporting, mounted games, eventing, polo cross, camp drafting and theory lessons on horse care. Generally riders will be allocated a group for instruction at rallies, these are based mainly on the rider's age and ability, as enjoyment with riders of their own age and friendship within groups is important.

Clubs should keep a rally attendance record in order to be able to verify that members have attended sufficient rallies for various competitions and schools.

Unmounted Rally Days:

Unmounted meetings are often held in place of mounted rally days during wet weather or for particular purposes. They can be structured around Horse Management instruction. Some examples of lessons, which vary greatly from club to club, include:

- Vet visits and vaccinations
- Temperature, pulse and respiratory rate
- Breeds of horses
- Feeding
- Shoeing
- Fitness and Training schedules

What you will need to start Pony Club:

- You must have access to a suitable horse (either owned or leased)
- Transport to the Pony Club
- ASNZS 3838, ASTM F1163 or EN 1384 approved Helmet
- Boots
- Club Uniform
- Well-maintained saddlery
- Water Bucket
- A Copy of 'Riding' instruction manual
- Access to a Rule Book (available online)



EFFICIENCY CERTIFICATES:

Throughout their Pony Club career, riders are encouraged to undertake various efficiency tests according to their age and ability - commencing with the basic 'D' test through to the 'A' test. These certificates aim to encourage the interest and improvement in knowledge of its members. They are viewed as a measure of a rider's progress in their overall efficiency. In working for them riders acquire valuable knowledge and skills, which enhance their riding experience.

A copy of the *Pony Club Australia Syllabus of Instruction* should be obtained by each member as this contains all information relating to the requirements for tests. 'Riding' is also an excellent reference manual for riders and parents as it contains information concerning all aspects of riding and horse care. These can be purchased through the State Office.

<p>D Certificate – 7 years+ Elementary knowledge of grooming, feeding and general care of the horse. Basic riding ability.</p>	<p>D Gold Star Certificate – 9 years+ Further knowledge of grooming, feeding, care of horses, parts of the horse. More capable riding ability.</p>
<p>C Certificate – 12 years+ Independent seat required, with correct aids and a degree of competence in other aspects of riding. General knowledge of horse care and parts of the horse. Written exam.</p>	<p>C Star – 14 years+ Active riding skills at a fast pace, using a correct, strong seat, well established in forward jumping position. Good horse knowledge.</p>
<p>K Certificate – 14 years+ Action activities and a 40km ride.</p>	<p>B Certificate – 16 years+ Active, capable rider who understands the aids thoroughly and can apply them appropriately.</p>
<p>H Certificate – 17 years+ No riding, all based on care of horses.</p>	<p>A Certificate – 17 years+ Strong rider able to ride a variety of mounts. High standard of horsemanship and general knowledge.</p>



Activities and Events in Pony Club

Equestrian Disciplines:

Dressage



Dressage is the art of improving the horse, making him more supple in his movements, a joy to ride and beautiful to watch. He must be a willing partner with a good mental attitude, willing to learn and wanting to please. The principles of dressage can be applied to improve the horse and rider in all disciplines.

During dressage competitions, riders are awarded scores on each required movement with a set test. The dressage test allows the rider to show the judge how they are progressing with the training.

Photo by Paulsmithphotography.com.au

Showjumping

Showjumping is an exciting sport which originated in the late 18th century as a part of foxhunting. It utilises physical skills to negotiate a series of obstacles and mental skills to plan the proper approaches to allow the horse to jump the obstacles. Riders must have the ability to ride the course according to plan. The object of showjumping at Pony Club is to teach riders to jump confidently at a controlled pace.



Pony Club members may learn the principles and techniques of designing, building, walking, assessing and riding Show Jumping courses throughout their Pony Club experience.

Eventing:

Eventing is a three-phase riding competition. The first phase is **Dressage** where the rider with the lowest penalty score is the leader of this phase. Next comes the **Cross Country** phase which involves jumping a series of fixed, numbered jumps in a large open space. The final phase of the competition is the **Showjumping**. This shows the horses' stamina, resilience and fitness to continue after completion of the previous two phases. Any penalty points in the two jumping phases are added to the dressage score and the winner is the one with the lowest overall score.



Photo by Susan Nadalini

Sporting

The term sporting events is applied to events such as: Bending races, Flag Races, Barrel Races and Tent Pegging. All Pony Club members are encouraged to take part in these games as these activities provide enjoyment and experience in active riding, while adding interest and variety. Paramount importance during sporting events is that the rider dictates the pace and line therefore applying the principles of basic training and improving the riders skills overall.



Mounted Games

Mounted Games provides reinforcement of the riding skills taught in Pony Club in a different environment to add interest and variety. Perhaps the most interesting part of riders becoming involved in Mounted Games is that they seldom realise their riding confidence and skills are improving. Mounted Games are played in teams of four riders. It requires horses to be supple, able to gallop, change direction, stand still and be obedient to the rider's aids. The games test a rider's speed, balance and coordination. Games are an activity that the newest rider can enjoy, as well as the more capable advanced riders.

Photo by Paulsmithphotography.com.au

Campdrafting

This is a uniquely Australian sport fostered within the Pony Club movement. The object of Campdrafting is to select a beast and quietly cut it out from the mob in an enclosure and then manoeuvre it around a set course. The main objective is to control the beast as close to the course as possible. This requires a versatile rider and horse that can skillfully cut out and control his beast. Points are allocated for cutout and work on the course.



Show Riding

Show Riding judges on both the rider's and the horses' attributes. The horses conformation, soundness, and movement are considered. It is the rider's job to demonstrate to the judge that the horse is obedient to change of pace and direction, is focused on the rider, and must look as this is all happening effortlessly. Coordinating riding with a partner or several other riders can be a complex task, show riding also examines the rider's ability to do this through pairs and troop drill events.

Activities and Events in Pony Club

Club and Zone Activities:

Rally days are the integral part of pony club. To supplement these other activities are offered such as gymkhanas, camps, trail rides, lectures and films, visits to places of interest and demonstrations.

Inter-club competitions are often held in the form of a **gymkhana**, which has a mix of show riding events, sporting and showjumping competitions.

Zone championships are generally held once a year for most of the disciplines listed above.

Your club/zone calendar is a key tool to making the most Pony Club!

State and National Events:

State Championships are held at roughly the same times each year. Please check the calendar, available through your club or via the website. All State Championships are being held in the second half of the year. Please check with your Club/Zone or the Association website for current dates.

These are as follows:

January	State Camp, State Dressage
April	State Sporting and Campdrafting
May	State Jumping Equitation
July	State Showjumping and State Polocrosse
October	State Mounted Games and State One Day Event
December	State Show Riding

State Camp is held each year for the top 15 riders in the State in their chosen discipline being Dressage, Showjumping, Eventing and Mounted Games. These riders come together at The Sydney International Equestrian Centre, Horsley Park, and are instructed by top Australian coaches. Applications close November each year.



Photo by Susan Nadalini

The **Australia Pony Club National Championships** are held every 2 years and hosted by a different state each time. The **National Senior Mounted Games Championships** and the **National Prince Philip Mounted Games Championships** are held annually with each state taking it in turn to host the events.

Instruction:

Club:

Each Rally Day will involve instruction in different disciplines by club instructors. All the instructors at Pony Club are volunteers. They receive training at instructor schools throughout the year and are continually learning.

If you would like to become a probationary instructor please speak to your Club Chief Instructor. Clubs always require more people to take on this role and the more instructors the club has the stronger the club becomes.

Regional Schools:

Riders can supplement their club instruction by attending a regional instructional school during the year with well-qualified instructors. Generally riders eligible to attend a regional school will be over the age of 10, who have obtained their 'D star' or 'C' Certificate and are regular members of Pony Club. The eligibility requirements differ between the schools, please refer to the State website for the specific criteria.

Schools are available in the disciplines of Dressage, Eventing, Showjumping, Jumping Equitation and Mounted Games.

Instructors Schools:

These schools held at regular intervals at Club, Zone and State level to educate instructors and potential instructors to give them an opportunity to gain or improve their qualifications for instruction at Pony Clubs. Instructors must be 17 years and over.

"Let me remind you that our purpose is not to make Olympic riders, though we will take great pride in any Pony Club member who can reach that height.

It is not to turn out highly polished riders mounted on expensive horses, though we all admire the picture when treated to it.

It is not to turn every child into an "A" rider....

It is to provide every child with a backyard horse or pony the opportunity to develop his or her skill in riding and horse care...

It is to instill in them a love for horses and an ability to care for and enjoy horses for the rest of their lives and through this contribute to their development as well-rounded, self-disciplined, responsible citizens.

If we have done these things, we will have done our job."

Care and Communication

HORSE CARE

Owning a horse or pony is huge responsibility. The **horse's welfare is paramount** in all equestrian activities. By joining Pony Club you have joined a resource of advice and assistance. Your club committee along with other members will be more than happy to give you help when required, *all you need to do is ask*.

A few important overall horse health issues to consider are:

- **Worming** – your horse should be on a regular worming schedule, generally this means you should administer worming paste to your horse every 6-8 weeks (depending on the type of wormer used) .
- **Hoof care** - Horses are not necessarily expected to be shod for pony club, providing their hooves are in good condition. However unshod horse's feet must show signs of being trimmed and cared for. A farrier should shoe or trim your horses feet every 4-6 weeks (depending on their growth rate).
- **Vets** – If something goes wrong with your horse and you are unsure of what to do, contact someone from your club for advice or a vet ASAP. Vets can also supply and administer tetanus and strangles vaccines along with any other needed vaccinations.
- **Dentist** – Horses need to have their teeth looked after too. Many vets provide this service, along with specialist Horse Dentists. Horses should have their teeth checked at least once a year.

It is important to **know the signs of good health**. Pony Club through instruction, advice and efficiency certificates, is a great way to learn the basic health care routines to keep your horse healthy.

A good support team of a vet, a farrier and other equestrian professionals, will ensure that your horse is fit, sound, and healthy. If you are new to caring for your horse or pony then **ask people within the club** for their advice on good vets, farriers and dentists in the area, they may also help you create a management plan for your horse's needs.

If your horse shows any sign of illness, particularly coughing or a runny, congested nose, do not bring him to the rally or events, as these types of illnesses rapidly spread to other horses at great cost to their owners, so please do the right thing and rest your pony at home.

Whilst attending Pony Club events, it is important that your pony is adequately cared for, especially when not being ridden. Riders need to ensure that horses are warm, fed and watered.



COMMUNICATION

Channels of communication are from:

Member ➡ Club ➡ Zone ➡ State

The State Website is updated regularly. It contains News items, updates, and valuable information such as changes to calendar dates or rules. It also has the results from State Championships and other events throughout the State.

The **State Newsletter** is emailed to members quarterly to update members on what is happening their State, upcoming events, reports on past events, profiles of current pony club members as well as interesting articles. Please make sure that you give your current email address to the Club Secretary upon joining, or subscribe online through the Association website.

A monthly update is also produced, called **PonE News**. This newsletter highlights upcoming events, competitions and directs members to interesting stories or results on the Association web page.

Many **Clubs and Zones** will have their own websites and monthly newsletters to keep you informed.

Other sources of information, available from the State Office, include:

- 'Riding' – *a helpful guide to instruction and horse management*
- The PCA Handbook – *can be downloaded from the Pony Club NSW website*
- NZ Pony Club Manual 1
- PCA Syllabus of Instruction
- NSW Probationary Instructors video
- NSW Level 1 Instructors video

Being a Good Horse Person Requires You to:

- ✓ Take responsibility for your horse;
- ✓ Take responsibility for yourself;
- ✓ Be proud of what you learn and share it with friends;
- ✓ Be respectful to your parents, instructors, and your peers
- ✓ Be willing to work hard, to be committed and to use common sense;
- ✓ Prevent problems by practicing sound horse care techniques every day;
- ✓ Take pleasure in a job well done;
- ✓ Enjoy the result of your efforts—a horse that is comfortable, happy and ready to work for you.

Make new friends, learn new skills
and most importantly of all have fun
in Pony Club! !



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This booklet was developed with the assistance of:

- United States Pony Club New Member Handbook
- Canadian Pony Club - New Parents' Guide to Pony Club
- Pony Club Association of Tasmania Information Brochure
- Various Pony Clubs within NSW including: Zone 28, Cowra, Geary's Gap, Londonderry, Salt Ash and The Oaks Pony Clubs.