

The  
British  
Horse  
Society

# Pony Stars

## Junior Challenge Awards

### Shetland Striders

### Syllabus for coaches

March 2021

Don't forget to also refer to the Activity Plans and Activity Sheets for delivery ideas and further resources



## GOLDEN GROOM

### BREEDS

Horse and pony breeds common to the UK.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Identify some common breeds of horses and ponies
- Tell you a fact about some breeds of horses and ponies
- Tell you some similarities and differences between some breeds

#### Guidance for coaches

- Children can identify three of the following: Shetland, Welsh Pony, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Cob, Suffolk Punch, Dales pony, New Forest, Cleveland Bay, Connemara and Shire. This can be horses and ponies on the yard or from photos if those breeds are not present.
- Children should be able to describe a feature or state a fact about the breed for example, Shetland is very small, usually thick mane and coat. Shetland originates from the Shetland Islands. Only one or two features required, they do not need to describe the breed in detail. Discuss the purpose and temperament of each breed. Are there any breeds with origins in the county or region you are in, or nearby? Discuss this with the group
- Children should be able to recognise one way which one breed is different from another (for example, height difference), and one way in which they are similar (hardy, tough). These differences make the ponies all special and unique – just like humans!

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Children to make a poster of their favourite breed. Include at least one picture and some interesting facts about them.
  - This can be done at home or at the yard
- Children to learn about: What does native and non-native pony mean? What features make native breeds more suited to living in the UK? What native and non-native breeds do you have at the yard? Learn about at least two non-native breeds.
  - You could also compare native breeds to non-native breeds or sports horses and describe the difference in care that may be required.
- The Welsh Pony breed has four breed varieties. Find out what these are and describe the features of each. Identify any of these breed varieties on the yard.

## GOLDEN GROOM

### COLOURS AND MARKINGS

This topic will introduce common colours and markings seen on horses and ponies.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Identify common colours of horses and ponies
- Identify the common facial markings
- Identify the common leg markings

#### Guidance for coaches

- Common colours: grey, black, chestnut, bay, palomino and coloured (piebald and skewbald can be generalised as 'coloured pony' for this topic)
- Common facial markings: stripe, star, blaze and snip
- Common leg markings: sock and stocking
- Children will need to identify the above colours and markings as a minimum, this can be horses and ponies on the yard or from photos if those colours/markings are not present
- Discuss that ponies are different colours and markings and this is what makes them all unique and special – just like humans do!
- While identifying colours and markings introduce points of the pony such as fetlock, knee, muzzle (points that relate to the marking)

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Children to learn about five more colours and three markings in ponies not learnt about in 1\*. They can either paint a picture of them or describe them to the coach and use the correct terms and names.
  - These will be colours not listed in the 1\* guidance such as: piebald, skewbald, dun, flea bitten grey, dapple grey, cremello, appaloosa, liver chestnut, blue roan etc
  - Markings not listed in 1\* such as: dorsal stripe, zebra stripes, wall eye, ermine marks
- Children to learn about some breeds of horses and ponies that have limited number of colours.
  - Discuss colours that you only see in certain breeds or colours you will never see in certain breeds (for example a Fell pony is always black). Link this to the 'Horse and Pony Breeds' topic

## GOLDEN GROOM

### HANDLING PONIES

This topic introduces the safe handling of ponies and to be aware of risk. How to approach a pony, give it a fuss and offer a treat safely and how your behaviour may affect your pony.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Understand how to behave around ponies
- Understand the potential consequences of not behaving correctly around ponies
- Know the importance of asking permission to approach a horse or pony that they do not know
- Approach a pony safely, position themselves and move around a pony safely
- Pat, stroke or fuss a pony safely and give a treat (only if the yard allows treats to be given)
- Give a reason why a pony would not be fed treats
- Identify a headcollar and lead rope and untie a pony

#### Guidance for coaches

- Children can have assistance at all times
- Introduce any specific yard rules about entering stables unsupervised, running, shouting etc and why these are here to keep everyone safe. Can also be linked to 'Stay Safe' and 'Kindness' topics in the Stable Star theme.
- Discuss a pony's 'blind spot' (where they can and cannot see) and why this affects how to approach a pony. Children should be aware to not approach a pony from behind or go near the back end of a pony.
- Moving around a pony safely (when tied up) includes things like keep hand on pony so he knows where you are, stand slightly to the side if near the head (a nose/head butt can hurt!)
- Discuss how behaviour such as shouting at a pony is unkind, how it might scare them and how it could influence negative behaviour with the pony. Lead to reflective discussions like how they feel when people shout at them – treat ponies how they want to be treated themselves and encourage positive relationship between them and the ponies, and each other. A good opportunity to reflect on their behaviour maybe away from the yard and how this affects the behaviour of others (negative behaviour like shouting, being aggressive can sometimes lead to conflict and how positive actions influence people for the better, similarly positive behaviour around a pony will help to ensure the pony is calm and friendly – positive behaviour in return)
- Patting/fussing a pony: the aim is for children to gain confidence being around ponies and to treat them with respect. Don't pat the head too hard, be able to stroke the face or scratch the neck gently and kindly say hello
- Giving a treat: can be by hand or in feed depending on centre policy about feeding treats. If centre does not give treats children can describe how to do this

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Put on a headcollar
  - Can have assistance
- Lead a pony in walk

- Can have assistance. Do not need to lead pony on their own, can walk next to coach or helper but should have basic awareness of where to position themselves, how to hold the rope and how to behave
- Ponies are tied on the yard using a special knot. What this is called, why it is used and how you tie this type of knot.
  - Tie a pony up using a quick release knot, explain why a horse is tied to bailer twine
  - Can have assistance to tie the knot
- When scared or feeling threatened, animals will either try to 'fight' or 'flight'. What this means and how this applies to ponies.
  - Explain the 'flight or flight response' and how this affects how horses react

## GOLDEN GROOM

### PONY OR HORSE

What's the difference between a horse and a pony, mare, gelding and foal?

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges:**

- Recognise a pony and a horse
- Use the terms mare, gelding and foal correctly
- Help to measure a pony

**Guidance for coaches**

- Children to recognise a horse and a pony. They do not need to know ponies are under 14.2hh and horses over this height, but instead recognise that ponies and horses are distinguished by their height and, on a basic level, ponies are small and horses are big. Should be able to tell you one pony and one horse on the yard and whether they are a mare or gelding.
- Children does not need to hold the measure but recognise how ponies are measured (up to withers)
- If the centre does not have a measure to practise with, discuss how to measure a pony instead

**\*\*Two star challenges**

- The units used to measure horses and ponies other than centimetres (cm) or metres (m).
  - Introduce the concept of accurately measuring horses and ponies, units used (hands and inches) and ponies are under 14.2 and horses 14.2 or over.
- Measure some ponies on the yard. Find something (or someone) at the yard that is the same height. Measure lots of different things and see which is closest.
  - This is to get them familiar using the measure (as much as they can without assistance). You can measure a range of ponies and see what on the yard, or who, is a similar height. Measure a pony and see if they can guess what might be a similar height, then measure this to confirm their guess. It could be any object – tree, fence rail, stable door, or another person or animal – be creative! If they are particularly bright you could see what is 'two times the height of pony x', or 'what is half the height of horse y', for example.
- Other words used to describe horses and ponies depending on their gender and age.
  - Further terms such as stallion, filly and colt

# PET PROTECTOR

## ANIMAL LOVER

Learn about local wildlife, how to show compassion and kindness to all animals and their environment.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges:**

- Recognise local wildlife and the environment they would live in
- Recognise how to be kind to animals and wildlife through own actions and behaviours
- Know why it is important to be kind to all animals and wildlife
- Be kind to animals and wildlife

**Coach guidance**

- Local wildlife could include birds, bugs, bees, butterflies, hedgehogs, farm animals, rabbits, badgers or deer – or anything you have near to your yard. Discuss where they live (habitat): do they live underground, in trees, water etc. Do they live on the ground or underground? Do they build a nest, sett, burrow? Use [Woodland Trust](#), [RSPB](#), [Wildlife Trust](#) website to research animals in your area and find facts about them.
- Ecosystems in a yard: Ecosystem - a community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment, for example, birds may make nests in nearby trees, bugs would thrive in a muck heap (and help to compost manure by digestion) – food for the birds!
- Being kind to animals would include, not scaring or chasing, looking after their environment, not creating hazards by littering, planting trees/plants that encourage wildlife by providing shelter or food, leaving out food and water. [How littering can affect animals](#) (source: RSPCA). [Be Horse Aware](#) (BHS)
- You can discuss what to do if they see an injured animal or an animal is pain, distress or neglected: [RSPCA guide to Animal Kindness](#)
- Can complete an activity at home and bring in photos towards achieving the topic

**\*\* Two star challenges**

- Become a Pet Protector role model! Tell people why what you care about is important. By telling others you can have a bigger impact.
  - You could ask them to record or discuss with you conversations they've had, or what they've done to try to influence others. You could set a target for them (for example talk to five family members or friends). Target dependent on age and suitability for child
- Make a collage of their favourite animal.
  - You could include things from a nature walk like leaves, flowers or small twigs.
  - For example, collect leaves and [make a leaf print butterfly](#) (Source: Countryfile)
- Create a poster showing their top three ways to be kind to animals and their environment.
- Make a bug or hedgehog hotel at the yard; a safe space for small critters to live. Could be as simple as piles of leaves, old wood etc.
  - Can be done as a group.

## PET PROTECTOR

### PET CARE

The responsibilities of looking after a pet, however big or small it may be!

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges:**

- Give examples of animals that can be kept as pets
- Tell you about the basic requirements that pet will need
- Outline a daily care plan for a pet, such as a dog, cat or pony

**Coach guidance**

- Children should be aware of the responsibilities of owning a pet: visiting it twice a day (if pet doesn't live at home – for example a pony), exercise or stimulation, providing food and water etc.
- The children can describe a care plan, or write it down, they can make a picture diary if they own a pet of a typical day or week, or they can make up a daily routine for an imaginary pet or their favourite pony on the yard and draw pictures

**\*\* Two star challenge**

- Help to look after an animal for a week. Write/draw about what they did, their responsibilities and anything they learnt. Create an advice leaflet to be able to give to someone so they would know how to look after the same pet.
  - Can be their own pet, a friends/neighbours or arrange a 'look after a pony day' at the yard for them to write about

# PET PROTECTOR

## ANIMAL WELFARE

All animals have basic needs that should be met to be happy and healthy.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges:**

- List basic welfare needs of all animals
- Describe how each basic welfare needs relates to looking after an animal of their choice

**Coach guidance**

- Link our basic human needs to animals' basic needs (food, water, love and care, exercise/play/fun, somewhere to live/shelter, medical care and company)
- Children can choose an animal of their choice – their own pet or favourite pony on the yard – to describe how these basic needs are met
- Link back to other topics in the Pet Protector series – how do these welfare needs relate to looking after an animal, or being kind to animals?
- Explain how the needs are relevant to all animals whether wild or in captivity, including farm animals and animals kept in zoos
- This topic includes making a game to play – similar to snakes and ladders – themed around the care of ponies. Land on a 'good practice' square they 'go up' land on a 'bad practice' square they 'go down'. As a group they can create the board, think of examples of good and bad care, the playing characters and name of the game. This gives the opportunity to discuss good and poor care and can be played on rainy days!

**\*\*Two star challenges**

- In the UK, an animal's welfare is protected by law. Find out what this means and what might happen if very poor animal care is given.
  - A basic understanding for example, they could get into trouble with the Police and face consequences. They do not need to know about going to court/fines/jail sentences if not appropriate for the age/group you have
- There are animal welfare charities that can offer support to owners and help educate them to improve their animal's care. Research a national or local charity and find out what they do.

## PET PROTECTOR

### IF MY PONY COULD TALK

What is your pony trying to say when his ears go back or forward? Interpret basic horse behaviour and expressions to help keep yourself safe and enjoy your time together.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Outline what a pony's ears can tell you about their behaviour
- Outline what a pony's body language can tell you about their behaviour
- Recognise behaviour which may mean it is not safe to approach the pony
- React appropriately to a pony's behaviour to keep themselves safe
- Recognise a pony that may be asleep or sleepy and how to approach to not startle them

#### Coach guidance

- Basic body language to understand when it is safe to approach or not approach a pony. Should be able to recognise a relaxed pony or a tense/agitated pony
- Pony' ears; forward, back, pinned back, one forward one to the side or back, moving – what this may mean in terms of behaviour and how to react or approach this pony (if at all)
- Body language; alert, relaxed/asleep (resting a leg, droopy head), grazing, stamping, kicking/rearing, pacing, sweating, running, snaking neck, snatching hay or food, snorting – what this may mean in terms of behaviour and how to react or approach this pony (if at all)
- Children should be able to point out ponies on the yard and tell you if they would be ok to approach, or describe to you when it is safe to approach a pony
- Children can point out to you when it may not be safe to approach a pony, however if this behaviour is not seen first-hand, they can describe to you the basics to look out for
- Children can point out to you when they recognise a pony asleep/drowsy/snoozing, however if this behaviour is not seen first-hand, they can describe to you the basics to look out for. They should be aware that if a pony is asleep, they should approach slowly and talk to the pony calmly so as to not startle them. They should be aware that if a pony is startled it could jump/spook/run away which could lead to an accident or injury for themselves or the pony

#### \*\*Two star challenge

- What causes you to be happy, sad, grumpy, angry or scared? What do think causes ponies to change their mood and are these the same reasons as you?
  - Discuss other factors that can influence a horse's behaviour; weather, environment (home or away from home), other ponies, noises, human behaviour, food (food time or lack of food), being ridden (associated pain), other pain and illness

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### MY RIDING KIT

This topic introduces the correct riding wear and equipment to help reduce the risk of injury when riding

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Wear appropriate safety equipment, footwear and clothing when riding
- Identify a body protector and its use
- State one reason why it is important to wear the appropriate clothing when riding
- Look after their riding equipment when in use and store appropriately after use
- Find an appropriate adult to have their hat checked for fit before riding
- State why jewellery is not recommended to wear when riding

#### Guidance for coaches

- Children do not need to own their own hat/boots etc, can be loaned at the centre.
- Looking after equipment covers things like don't drop your hat, store it so it cannot roll and keep in a dry environment. Boots (if leather) should be cleaned regularly to avoid cracking and a leather dressing or waterproof polish can be applied to care for leather
- Appropriate footwear may be jodhpur boots or boots with a small heel (if they do not own jodhpur boots)
- Body protectors are not compulsory to wear but are strongly recommended for children, particularly those learning to ride; follow own centre's protocol for this
- Appropriate clothing would be; appropriate for the weather, non-flapping or loose or noisy clothing, arms covered and full-length trousers. Jodhpurs not compulsory but trousers or leggings that will not pinch and that do not have embellishments, studs or poppers that can scratch the saddle. Also discuss here long hair to be tied back (if appropriate to children). Also they should be aware a hat should fit – and why this is important and who at the centre they should go to before a lesson to have a hat fit/checked (particularly if borrowing from the centre)

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Describe two points which may indicate your riding hat doesn't fit
  - They should be aware how a riding hat should fit and be able to tell you if it's loose (ie, sits too low or moves up and down), or the chin strap is too loose or too tight. They do not need to have detail as a hat fitter would, but should be aware of two things to be able to tell you if their hat is too big or too small.
- Create a poster to put up at the yard which lists the important clothing to wear when riding.
- What does PPE mean? What is the PPE for riding?
  - Introduce the term PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), what this means and how it relates to horse riding
- There are UK safety standards with essential safety equipment such as your riding hat or body protector. Find out where this is displayed on your hat and what the current safety standards are.

- Introduce safety standards for hats and body protectors, where this is displayed on the hat or body protector and how to find the current safety standards (BHS or BETA website). The importance of finding an approved fitter if buying a hat or body protector, local approved sellers/fitters, importance of not buying second-hand and to replace if had a fall

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### RIDING SKILLS 1

Basic riding skills for beginner riders

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Stand in a safe position ready to mount
- Hold their reins correctly
- Sit in the correct riding position
- Sit up when walking, turning and stopping
- Use aids to ask their horse to walk on and halt

#### Guidance for coaches

- Riders can be assisted, on lead rein, hold saddle or neck strap whilst riding if needed, only walk is required
- Holding reins; should be able to hold reins correctly, but can hold on to saddle or neck strap when required whilst riding. An awareness that when they are holding the reins they should be equal length
- Children should be aware of how to sit in the saddle and working towards this during lessons (although a 'perfect' seat does not need to be established to achieve this topic); vertical line through ear, shoulder, hip and heel and sitting up straight looking forwards. Include balance skills like 'round the world' whilst pony is standing.
- Children should be working towards using the correct aids for walk (squeezing legs), turn (use one rein) and halt (use both reins) and/or to ask the horse to "walk on" and "woah" for halt when required. A demonstration of at least one of these aids is required

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Ask the children to hold the reins in one hand and then back to two hands and see if the children can hold the reins correctly unaided
  - Alternate the hands that the reins are held in. Standing still and in walk
- Shorten and lengthen the reins to an appropriate length unassisted
  - Standing and in walk
- Introduce school figures and ask the children to apply correct rein and leg aids for turning and stopping
  - Circle and figure of eight
- Begin to count the beat at walk and ask them if they can feel which legs are moving
- Letting go of both reins in walk. Half scissors
- Describe the basic riding position to you
  - Include why stirrups in ball of foot. Sit up straight (ear, shoulder, hip, heel). Heels down, elbows bent. Very basic things at this level

#### \*\*\*Three star challenges

- Begin to walk your pony off lead rein
  - They can have an assistance walking at the side ready to step in if necessary

- Make a target like 5 laps of the school, in walk, sitting up straight. Include some halts and turns
- Begin to learn about straightness in walk and how to keep your pony on a straight line
  - set up some alleys using poles on the floor, can they keep their pony straight? Begin to narrow the space allowed
  - Why is it important to keep your pony straight?
- Working towards a balanced position in trot
  - This can be on lead rein
- Further balance tests include putting both hands on your head, or arms outstretched when walking and full scissors.
  - Arms could be outstretched and still (like a scarecrow), and making arm circles

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### GETTING ON

How to prepare for and get on your pony safely

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Recognise a safe place to get on their pony
- Approach their pony safely
- Stand in a safe position ready to be mounted
- Run their stirrups down before mounting
- Mount safely with assistance
- Put feet in stirrups and hold the reins ready to ride

#### Guidance for coaches

- Riders can be assisted at all times
- Do not have to mount unaided, can have a leg up or be lifted to be put on
- Awareness of hand placement (front of saddle) and why placing right hand at back of saddle could cause saddle to twist, and how to hold reins when mounting

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Lead the pony from the stable/yard to a safe place to mount
- Check girth for comfort and adjust girth (mounted or unmounted)
- Check own stirrups and adjust stirrups
- Begin to mount unaided

## JUNIOR JOCKEY

### DISMOUNT

How to prepare for and get off your pony safely

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Recognise a safe place to halt their pony
- Cross their stirrups (before getting off)
- Dismount safely with assistance
- Walk away from their pony safely

#### Guidance for coaches

- Riders can be assisted at all times
- Awareness to keep their hat on until they have left the arena

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Loosen girth (mounted or unmounted)
- Run up stirrups
- Begin to dismount unaided
- Lead the pony out of the arena back to stable/yard

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### COUNTRYSIDE

Find out how you can look after the countryside so everyone can enjoy it.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Know the name of the Code relevant to where children lives
- List the main rules in the Code
- Describe a basic reason for each rule
- Know why it is important to follow the Code

#### Guidance for coaches

The code is known as:

- The Countryside Code in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- The Scottish Access Code in Scotland
- Also a Leave No Trace scheme in Ireland
- Simple rules and reasons. Encourage children to suggest reasons themselves.
- If appropriate use the headings: Respect other people, Protect the natural environment, Enjoy the outdoors

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Follow the code when you go for a walk. Look for examples of where the code has been followed or where it has been ignored. When you spot an example make a note of it or take a picture. Share what you have found with your group.
- Get together with friends and make up a show all about how wonderful the countryside is. Tell people why it is important to look after it and about the code that helps us do this. You could be the stars of the show or your toys could be centre stage. Ask an adult to record you.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### BE NICE, SAY HI

Find out how other road users should pass horse and pony riders safely

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- State why horses and ponies can react to things that the rider cannot see or hear
- Outline how a walker or cyclist should pass a pony and rider safely
- Outline how to pass a pony and rider safely in a vehicle
- Outline the 'Be Nice, Say Hi' actions
- Outline the risk and effect of pedestrians, cyclists and cars passing too fast or too close (or both) to a horse or pony

#### Guidance for coaches

- Discuss how horses are flight animals and rely on their senses to stay alive (hearing, vision, smell) (also covered in horse behaviour topic so could be a recap if that topic has been completed)
- Discuss what could cause a horse to react suddenly when riding out
- Discuss what a horse or pony can do if they are frightened (run away, spin, rear, move or jump sideways)
- Discuss how they would feel if a pedestrian, cyclist or car came past them too fast and too close
- Discuss how to pass a horse safely as a pedestrian, cyclist and car drivers
- Focus on good behaviour by all of those user groups and what they should do; slow down, give plenty of space (wide and slow), Say Hi, smile, wave (Be Nice) (wave if safe to do so – or nod), go slowly away

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Create a 'Be nice, say hi' poster. You could display this in a window to encourage others to pass ponies safely.
- Discuss the responsibilities horse riders have to play their part in acknowledging those that pass horses safely, wear correct hi vis (to be seen early) and ride responsibly. If a driver that passed safely was not thanked, how might this make them feel and act with the next rider they pass
  - What are our responsibilities as horse riders when riding on the road? (1. Wearing high-viz. What high-viz is available to purchase for horse and rider? 2. Showing appreciation for considerate road users. How do we thank road users? How might they feel if we don't thank them and what might they do differently next time they see a rider on the road?)
  - If we ride out, what is the correct procedure to follow? (Ride out with a responsible adult on a pony you can control, take a phone, tell someone at home the route and approximate time you will be out, check the route you are taking is free from hazards/roadworks to the best of your ability, wear high-viz, take a hoof pick, be aware at all times, check the pony's shoes, check tack for safety.)

- Tell other people how to pass ponies safely on the road. The more people you tell, the bigger impact you will have and help to create safer roads for riders. Hopefully, they will care about it as much as you do!
  - You can contact the Safety Team to ask for car stickers that the children can give to a family member or friend and then the child can tell them why it is important to pass horses wide and slowly. Telephone: 02476 840516 or Email: [safety@bhs.org.uk](mailto:safety@bhs.org.uk). If emailing don't forget to add the quantity you need and the full postal address to send them to.
  - Download from Accredited Professional Hub (or contact the Safety Team for printed copies) the 'Be Nice Say Hi Notice to Parents'; read this to the children and then ask them what the main points are to tell an adult? The child can take home the leaflet and use this as prompts when discussing what they have learnt about.

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### FARM ANIMALS

Discover the common farm animals in the UK and what to do if you see them when out riding

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- Recognise common farm animals
- Describe how a pony may react to farm animals on a ride out
- Describe how to ride past farm animals
- Describe what to do if you meet farm animals on a walk

#### Guidance for coaches

- Common farm animals could be pigs, sheep, cows, bulls, ducks, geese, chickens, donkeys, llamas, or any other animal that may be local to your area. Find out facts about different farm animals to discuss via [RSPCA](http://www.rspca.org.uk)
- How a pony may react: via seeing or smelling the animals/farm. Horses don't like the smell of pigs! Horse may be aware of the animals before the rider (horse has better vision/hearing/sense of smell)
- Also important to identify animals that could pose a threat or become aggressive when out hacking (bulls, stallions, mother and their young)
- If you don't have access to any farm animals you can do a virtual farm walk: <http://www.virtualfarmwalk.org/index.html> - there are also lots of downloadable resource sheets here: <http://www.virtualfarmwalk.org/teachers.html>
- Another website that offers some free resources is: <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/farm-animals> (some sheets require you to be a member but there are lots of free ones)
- Explain that most farmland is private land and must get permission to ride or walk across. If a public footpath or bridleway runs through the land then you may come across farm animals close by or in the same field. The risks of these should be explained and the importance of closing gates and sticking to the track

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Choose one farm animal you have learnt about and research how they are looked after. Do they have different needs to ponies?
- As well as the common farm animals, there may be other wild animals you may see out and about, such as deer, pheasant or rabbit. See how many you can name and think about how they may react to seeing people or ponies. Discuss how you can be respectful to them and their environment.
  - Deer, pheasant, rabbit, hare, partridge, squirrel

## EQUINE EXPLORER

### EXPLORE

Know where you can and cannot ride on your pony

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- List places where you can ride on a pony
- List places where you should not ride
- Identify a marker for a route to ride and a route where you cannot ride
- Know that permission from landowners may be required for some routes
- Know how to dress for the weather and be comfortable for a ride out

#### Guidance for coaches

- Where you can ride: bridleway, road, woodland (unless restricted route), beach (some), forest, common land – ensure using terms relevant to your Nation
- Where it's advised not to ride, or you cannot ride: pavement, footpath, restricted routes,
- Markers: should be able to identify one of the following for where to ride: bridleway, restricted byway or byway. Where not to ride: footpath, private land (if no permissive route through). Try to discuss local examples if you can
  - Not to ride: Footpaths - for walking, running, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Bridleways - for walking, horse riding, bicycles, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Restricted byways - for any transport without a motor and mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
  - Can ride: Byways open to all traffic - for any kind of transport, including cars (but they're mainly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders)
- Children should be aware of restrictions in some places where you can ride (for example on a beach you must make sure ponies are allowed and be aware of tide times, busy periods)
- Children should be aware of how to stay warm and comfortable if it's a cold day, or how to stay protected and hydrated if it's a hot day

#### Two star challenges

- The route markers and symbols you have spotted will also be marked on a map. Look at a local map and see if you can spot a route near you.
  - Look at an OS map of your area and spot the bridlepaths, footpaths, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. (By asking around, you may find a parent who has an OS map of the area for the group to examine. OS maps can be found online for viewing)
- You can list all access routes in your Nation and the markers associated with them.
  - Discuss all route markers (footpath, bridleway, byway, restricted byway)

## STABLE STAR

### KINDNESS

This topic establishes the behaviours and attitudes that show kindness to all to facilitate a considerate and safe environment on the yard

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

- Outline how to behave appropriately on a yard
- Follow the yard rules with regards to behaviour
- Show kindness and respect to all on the yard
- Identify who they can talk to if they are worried or something has happened that they are concerned about

##### Guidance for coaches

- Design your own or use template codes of conducts. Include being kind to humans and animals
- Discuss behaviour that is not kind, and what effect this can have people
- Discuss who they can talk to if they feel someone is unkind to them
- Talk to children about your centre safeguarding officer and encourage them to remember who they can talk to if they have a worry or concern

##### \*\*Two star challenges

- Repetitive and intentional unkind behaviour is bullying. Discuss the different forms of bullying and how you can keep yourself and others safe from bullying. Make a pledge to be united with your friends to stand against bullying. What will you do if you see someone being bullied?
  - Children can write their pledge in the My Challenge Book – you may need to discuss what a pledge is if they do not already know (a pledge is a promise)
  - Discuss what bullying means and why it is not kind; that is can be verbal, physical or via social media. Discuss how they can keep themselves safe and who to talk to if they feel they are being bullied
  - Children is aware of other places to report a worry to such as childline

## STABLE STAR

### YARD SMART

This topic will introduce how to keep yourself, others and horses safe on a yard, how to prevent accidents and what is considered good hygiene for humans and horses

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

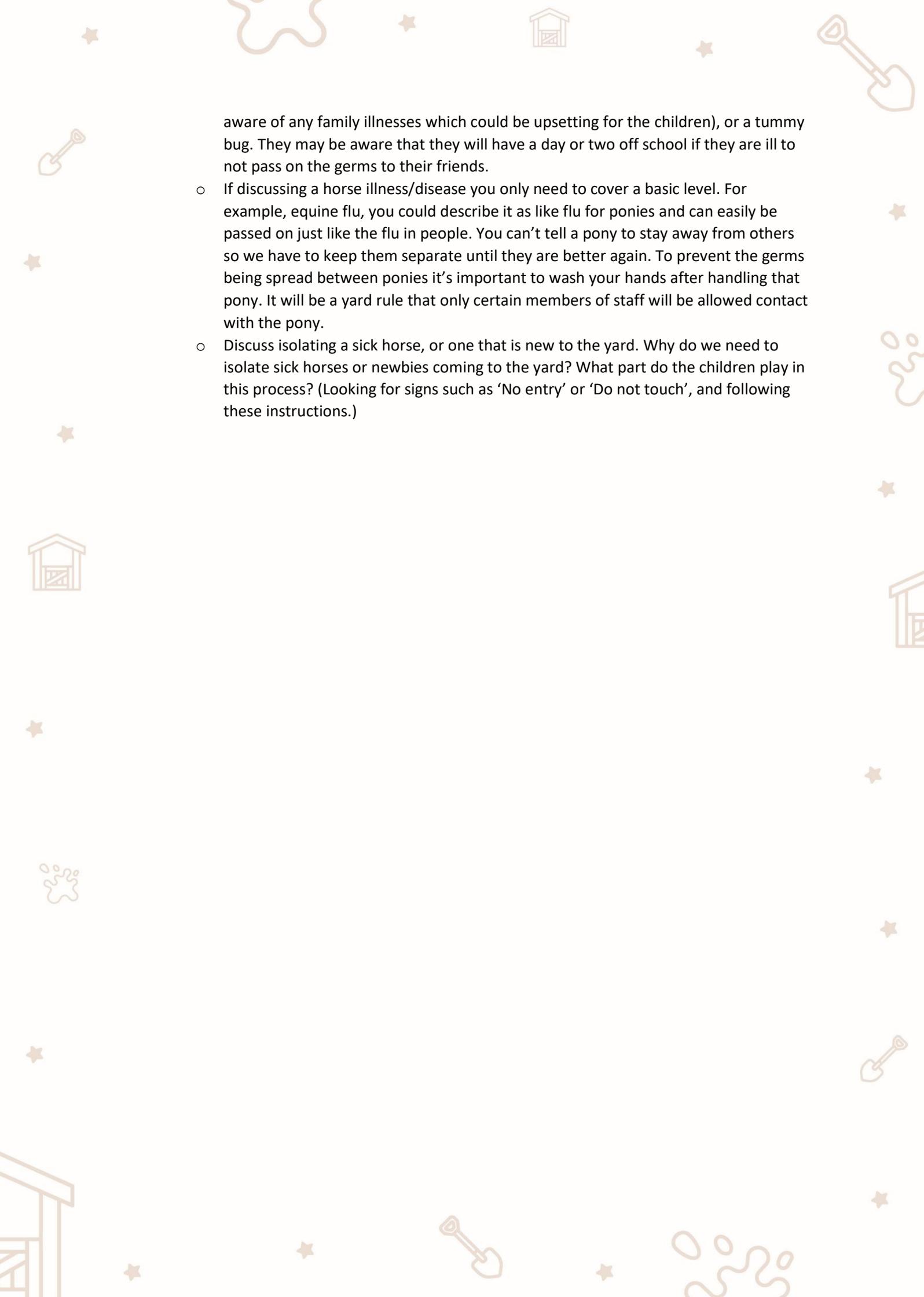
- Behave appropriately for a yard to be a safe and kind environment for all
- Outline yard procedure and rules to follow when at the centre
- Identify how their actions may have an effect on their safety, that of others or horses on the yard
- Identify equipment they can use with supervision and any equipment they are not allowed to use
- List equipment on the yard that can be used to help reduce the risk of an accident or incident
- Follow good hygiene practice on the yard

##### Guidance for coaches

- Discuss the yard protocol and rules you have at your centre and why these are in place to keep everyone safe. Include discussions on when to be supervised, areas on the yard they are or are not allowed in, horses and ponies they should not handle or go near etc
- Children should be aware of the importance of their behaviour on the yard, and able to say why inappropriate behaviour such as running and shouting may be dangerous
- Be able to explain what equipment is needed to improve safety when carrying out certain tasks, for example, hard hat, boots & gloves
- Show and discuss the correct procedure for lifting and discuss not to lift heavy items
- Good hygiene; washing hands after any yard activity, handling ponies, before eating etc, the benefits of this for both pony and person. Depending on what other activities you have carried out with the children you could also include washing out feed buckets, understand why we clean bits after use, key areas to keep clean on the yard)

##### Two star challenges

- Sometimes an accident will happen on the yard. Your coach will tell you the correct procedure to follow and why it is important that an accident is recorded.
  - Discuss accident recording and where the accident book is
- Learn more about good hygiene practice with ponies. New ponies on the yard should be isolated away from others for a period of time, find out why this is. Why is it good practice to not handle ponies you do not know?.
  - Explain why new horses should be isolated at first for hygiene reasons
  - Reasons for not handling ponies they do not know – could link to riding out, not allowing ponies to sniff/touch other ponies
- Name two diseases that may be spread on a yard through poor hygiene, and how this could be stopped or the spread limited
  - You can discuss this with the children yourself if they are too young to research. It could be simple human illnesses such as a cold or flu (could discuss Covid but be

The page has a light beige background decorated with various farm-related icons and stars. The icons include a horse head, a barn, a shovel, a cloud, and a fence. The stars are small and scattered throughout the page.

aware of any family illnesses which could be upsetting for the children), or a tummy bug. They may be aware that they will have a day or two off school if they are ill to not pass on the germs to their friends.

- If discussing a horse illness/disease you only need to cover a basic level. For example, equine flu, you could describe it as like flu for ponies and can easily be passed on just like the flu in people. You can't tell a pony to stay away from others so we have to keep them separate until they are better again. To prevent the germs being spread between ponies it's important to wash your hands after handling that pony. It will be a yard rule that only certain members of staff will be allowed contact with the pony.
- Discuss isolating a sick horse, or one that is new to the yard. Why do we need to isolate sick horses or newbies coming to the yard? What part do the children play in this process? (Looking for signs such as 'No entry' or 'Do not touch', and following these instructions.)

## STABLE STAR

### STAY SAFE

Riding schools are often busy, large, open environments so learn how to stay safe when at your centre.

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

- Report to an appropriate adult when they arrive at the centre
- Follow centre guidance with regards to signing in and signing out themselves and guests (parents/carers etc that may come to watch)
- Tell you why it is important to let an adult know where they are
- Tell you why it is important to be supervised when at the centre and around ponies
- Identify the areas at the centre that are restricted access
- Recognise staff members and who to talk to if they feel unsafe or worried at any time

##### Guidance for coaches

- This may be covered during their initial induction at the centre
- Centre staff should be easily recognisable for the children – for example wearing centre uniform
- Children should be aware of where they can and cannot go on a yard, and why supervision is required at all times (ponies can be unpredictable)

##### \*\*Two star challenges

- Get creative and design a poster to show others how to stay safe on a yard.
- Show someone around the yard, remembering to let them know the important rules about how to be safe on the yard.
  - This can be completed individually or part of a group and they can have assistance (should not be left on their own and can carry out the tour with their coach). The situation can be set up – eg, the children carry out a yard tour for another member of staff or friend.
  - Children can take it in turns to repeat the yard tour to each other or their parents/guardians/another member of staff, pointing out potential hazards, no go areas, warning signs, and how to act safely on the yard.

## STABLE STAR

### WHAT TO WEAR

What to wear on the yard when working around ponies

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

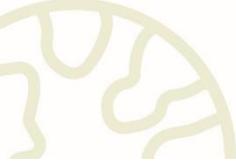
- List appropriate clothing to wear when on the yard
- List appropriate clothing during seasonal or weather changes
- State one reason why it is important to wear the appropriate clothing when on the yard
- Look after any clothing lent to them whilst on the yard

#### Guidance for coaches

- Children do not need to own their own hat/boots etc, can be loaned at the centre.
- Follow centre protocol with regards to appropriate clothing; but generally appropriate clothing would be; appropriate for the weather, non-flapping or loose or noisy clothing. Also discuss here long hair to be tied back (if appropriate to children). No dangly jewellery.
- Looking after equipment covers things like don't drop your hat, store it so it cannot roll and keep in a dry environment.
- Explain why sometimes it is appropriate for a hat and gloves to be worn when handling ponies on the ground

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- There's a particular term you may hear on the yard when people talk about safety equipment or clothing, called PPE. Discover what this means and how it relates to tasks carried out on the yard. Many jobs require PPE such as a police officer or firefighter. Can you think of any other jobs that require PPE and what type of PPE?



## HELPING HERO

### GROW YOUR OWN

Connect to nature and learn all about the benefits that gardening can have, then have a go at growing your own!

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- List the basic needs of plants and flowers for them to grow
- List benefits that plants give to the environment and wildlife
- Identify some common flowers or plants
- List some considerations when planting near ponies or other animals
- Plant seeds or bulbs

#### Guidance for coaches

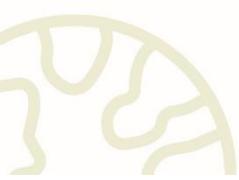
- This topic is best completed during Spring/Summer, when flowers are in bloom and can be identified. Also good time to get the children involved with planting seeds or bulbs, watering and tending to the plants. Note: If you are planting this can become a bit mucky! You will need children to bring wellies or yard boots, old clothes or an apron, you may need to provide gloves if children cannot bring their own
- This topic can be completed using any kind of plants or flowers; indoors or outdoor, hanging basket, bedding plants or shrubs, wildflower patch or garden, and any type of flower or plant that you have or want to grow
- Planting flowers: can be a simple hanging basket or indoor pot plant. Wild flowers can be very easy to grow and create lots of colour and attract many wildlife – is there a small patch of greenery you have? You could even talk about sowing grass seeds if you do this at your centre and the benefits this has to the grass/hay the ponies eat
- Basic needs of plants and flowers: sun, space, food, water or talk about the plants that you have at the yard – some require more shady areas for example
- Identify plants – identify what you have at the yard or a local park – this could be flowers or shrubs – anything that you have
- Considerations: That what you're planting isn't poisonous or harmful to any animals that could get to the plants (most wild animals instinctively know what they can and can't eat but domestic animals like dogs, cats and ponies are likely to try to eat anything!), that you plant them so ponies can't access them (for example don't hang a hanging basket outside a stable – or your pony is likely to eat it!)
- Benefits: provide food for lots of different animals including bugs, bees, butterflies and birds. Absorb carbon dioxide (the waste we breathe out) and convert it to oxygen (what we breathe in). Some flowers can help to repel bugs and flies, for example geraniums, marigolds and wild garlic. Planting and tending to flowers can be very relaxing whilst being outdoors and getting fresh air – sometimes can be hard work and be a nice outdoor workout! Once planted, flowers can provide lots of lovely colours and smells to help brighten up your day.

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Create the perfect pony plant patch! Dream up the best pony friendly garden patch you can think of with pony friendly grasses, herbs, vegetables and plants. Research what could go in



your garden and design your dream patch! What will you be able to smell and see? If there is space at the yard you may be able to plant some of the suggestions, but don't worry if not, your colourful design will be just as pretty!

- Research pony friendly grasses, flowers, plants, vegetables and herbs – are there any you can add to their paddock/grazing?
  - Pony friendly herbs include: mint, parsley, wild garlic – even nettles and dandelions which we may consider weeds are very good for ponies (some have to be cut/picked before ponies will eat them)
  - Centre decision if they can be planted in paddocks, if not, the children can still design their dream garden patch
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## HELPING HERO

### FEED THE BIRDS

Identify local birds and help to create a feeding station

**Key points: children will be able to:**

**\*One star challenges**

- List some basic welfare needs of birds
- Identify some common birds
- List bird friendly foods
- Create a feeding station for birds

**Guidance for coaches**

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- Welfare needs: Link to Pet Protector topic – Animal Welfare. Basic welfare needs are (food, water, love and care, exercise/play/fun, somewhere to live/shelter, medical care and company). Discuss with wild animals such as birds that love and care is difficult to give from humans, however, whilst they are nestlings and fledglings they will receive love and care from their parents until they are ready to leave the nest and fend for themselves. Similarly medical care is difficult to provide for wild animals, but there are lots of animal welfare charities that will help wild animals in need. See [RSPB](#) advice
  - Common birds: can be any three birds common to your centre. Common birds include sparrow, robin, blue tit, magpie, pigeon and are usually easily identifiable for children. You can also look at pictures of birds
  - Bird friendly foods: a general awareness that different breeds of birds will like different foods and have different diets. Should be able to list two general foods such as seeds, nuts, mealworms, flies, insects/bugs, suet, fat, sweetcorn, oats, berries, fruit such as apples, grapes
  - A feed station could be food on the ground or in feeders. Feeders can be bought or homemade. If on the yard, consider location (away from where ponies can reach)

**\*\*Two star challenge**

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- Can you identify any birds just by their call?
    - You can go onto the RSPB website and listen to bird song if seeing/hearing birds outside isn't an option



## HELPING HERO

### FIRST AID 1

This topic will introduce what first aid is, how to keep safe and who to call for help

#### Key points: children will be able to:

##### \*One star challenges

- Outline what first aid is and how to show kindness when helping others
- Outline how to keep safe when helping others
- Describe the actions to take to assist a first aid situation
- State how to call 999 and what they may need to communicate on the phone
- Follow the first aid procedure on the yard

##### Guidance for coaches

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- Children should be aware of their own safety and be aware to consider their own safety before assisting with a first aid incident and any potential danger to themselves or the injured person. Children to be aware to find an adult first if possible
  - Children should be reassured to stay calm and to take a deep breath to try to assess the situation before considering actions. Follow DR ABC: Danger, Response Airway. Breathing, Circulation
  - They should know how to call 999, and understand the importance of staying calm and able to communicate important information to person on the phone. If not known, the difference between the emergency services: police, ambulance, fire and the same number is used for all
  - Discuss a few key phrases or actions that show kindness in a first aid situation and can help to reassure a person who is injured or required first aid
  - Discuss first aid on the yard; Who are the first aiders? Where is the first aid kit? Where can they find the address of the yard? Extra risks to consider include, are there any ponies loose or able to cause further injury? They are unlikely to use this information as the yard is always busy and there are likely to be nominated first aiders and other adults who will help in a situation but you can begin to discuss the topic.

##### \*\*Two star challenges

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- Find out how to take someone's pulse.
    - Demonstrate taking a pulse
    - Demonstrate checking for breathing
  - Discuss allergies and how these could lead to a serious allergic reaction and the action to take
  - Practice basic wound cleaning for a graze or cut
    - Should be aware of things like low pressure water (from hose or tap) if possible to clean wound, not direct water into wound but from the top so water runs down. If need to use sponge instead to not press into the wound.
    - Once wound is clean how to stop bleeding (if necessary).
    - Remember to wash hands thoroughly after.
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## HELPING HERO

### CLEAN UP

Ponies produce a lot of poo! It's important to keep the yard paddocks and stables clear of mess and droppings to benefit the health and welfare of your pony.

**Key points: children will be able to:**

#### \*One star challenges

- List types of waste that a riding centre may produce
- Outline how to dispose of that waste safely and considerately
- Dispose of their own rubbish correctly when at the centre
- Describe the importance of keeping a muck heap tidy
- Dispose of muck correctly and maintain the muck heap
- State the importance of keeping the yard and feed room tidy
- Help to sweep the yard and feed room

#### Guidance for coaches

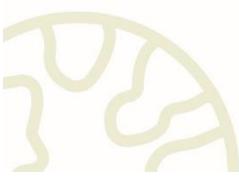
- Types of waste: anything from used straw/shavings/hay, pony droppings, empty feed sacks, uneaten horse food, stale water from troughs or buckets not drunk, bailing twine, broken things (tools, buckets, brushes, tack), general litter
- Disposing of rubbish: follow centre guidance with regards to waste bins to use, recycling etc. Children should be aware that they should dispose of their own rubbish and not leave it for someone else to do. To help keep the yard tidy and free from rubbish and why this is – stray litter can scare ponies or the ponies or other wildlife could try to eat it
- Keeping yard tidy: Waste such as horse food can become mouldy/smelly and encourage mice or rats. Important to sweep up waste food so ponies do not try to eat dirty/wet/mouldy scraps. Keeping the yard tidy makes it a safer and more enjoyable place to be!
- The muck heap: Muck heaps can also be used for composting food waste such as leftover fruit and veg scraps which can then be used as fertiliser/food for crops. Important to identify what can and cannot be put on a muck heap, for example, no litter
- Dispose of muck/maintain muck heap: children may be too small to push a wheelbarrow to a muck heap and dispose of muck, but could help to fork up some muck, pat it down etc and why this is done

#### \*\*Two star challenges

- Could you give a persuasive talk on why we should all reduce our waste?
  - Help the children to research facts so that they could contribute to a persuasive discussion about why we should all reduce our waste and recycle more. Discuss reasons for 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' (save natural resources, eg, trees, preserve natural spaces, save energy, reduce pollution in the air, land and water, reduce landfill space and associated pollution). Think what could be raised as a counter argument (recycling costs too much, recycling causes pollution) and investigate if these claims are true.
  - How can children contribute to reducing waste? (Recycle, take a litterless lunch to school, turn off the lights when they leave a room, reuse paper (use the other side for notes/working out homework), turn off the tap whilst they are brushing teeth,



walk/cycle to school if it's safe to do so, give unwanted items to charity, spread the word about what they are doing, and why they are doing it.)

- The muck heap is a bug hotel! Find out what kind of bugs like to live there.
    - Wellies/protective clothing and gloves to be used if digging up a bit of the muck heap to look at bugs
    - Benefits of bugs in the muck heap – help to break down/rot the waste by eating it.
  - Understand where a muck heap should be located and why (ideally raised and away from water course)
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