



# Lovelane Family Handbook

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## Lovelane's Mission

In a fun, supportive environment, Lovelane provides high-quality therapeutic horseback riding lessons to achieve occupational, physical, speech, cognitive and other therapeutic gains, focusing on children with special needs.

## Lovelane's Vision

Lovelane focuses on children with special needs to enhance their lives and the lives of their families by providing life-long benefits, primarily through innovative therapeutic horseback riding.

# Who are We?

## What is Lovelane?

Lovelane is a therapeutic horseback riding program that dramatically impacts the physical and cognitive development of children with special needs through its holistic approach and unique supportive environment. Lovelane is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization and a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International. Lovelane has been providing high-quality therapeutic horseback riding to students with special needs since 1988. What started as the ultimate grassroots organization – serving five families in a backyard barn – has grown into a premier equine therapeutic program in a state-of-the-art indoor heated facility located in Lincoln, Massachusetts. The organization believes in the significance of quality one-on-one support for each student. Our goal is to utilize the horse and this setting to make a significant impact on each student's life beyond the riding ring. We do this through our personalized sessions, our long-term commitment to their growth, our constant communication with their families, and through our intimate experience with their ever-changing needs and development.

## Who Do We Serve?

Lovelane's core lesson program serves approximately 100 students weekly in private mounted therapeutic riding lessons. Approximately 50 additional students join us weekly for unmounted therapeutic and collaborative programs. Lovelane students have cognitive and physical disabilities and a wide range of conditions including (but not limited to) Autism, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, Down syndrome, hearing and sight impairments, spinal cord injuries, and cancer. Families come to Lovelane from 39 communities throughout the greater Boston area. Lovelane partners with local nonprofits that serve special needs and underserved populations including, The Coting School, City to Saddle, Esperanza Academy, The Klarman Eating Disorder Center at McLean Hospital, and The Perkins School for the Blind.

## Who is a part of your student's team?

**Instructors:** Lovelane employs between 11-15 experienced instructors. All have their MA Riding Instructor License, most are Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors through PATH Intl., and a few of these instructors are also therapists. Lovelane's instructors are dedicated to their craft, collaborate to share expertise and best practices, and engage in continuing education opportunities. They are also open to collaborating with your student's other therapeutic providers and diligently stay up to date with the information you share about your student.

**Volunteers:** Volunteers are integral to the program design at Lovelane: over 100 volunteers each week assist in lessons and care for our horses. Lovelane's volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds including skilled equestrians, professionals, teachers, students, retirees and stay-at-home parents. Volunteers receive on-the-job training to help them to perform their duties safely and effectively. Generally, the minimum age to volunteer in lessons is 16. We occasionally schedule younger teenagers with solid horse experience for barn work. If anyone you know is interested in volunteering, please review our volunteer job descriptions on our website and contact our Volunteer Manager.

**Horses:** Lovelane's horses are the cornerstone of our program. We have many different types of horses, all shapes and sizes, to meet the needs of our diverse student population. It takes a very special animal to do this job and we take great care in selecting and training the horses used in our program. Before entering a new horse into Lovelane's program, they first must go through a trial session. During their trial, potential new horses are evaluated and many factors are considered. The temperament of the horse is one of the most important characteristics we look at, as we are committed to providing our riders with a safe and quiet ride. The horse's quality of movement and soundness are also critical to its performance in the program. Lovelane is always on the lookout for new horses!

# How to Get the Most Out of Your Student's Lesson

Each student at Lovelane receives goal-oriented, individualized, and fun programming. We tailor our approach to focus on developing the inherent abilities of each student as they participate in an engaging and challenging recreational sport. Our primary goals are to work towards each student's therapeutic goals, to improve their quality of life, and to help them gain the confidence and self-esteem needed to succeed beyond the Lovelane arena.

## Tips on how to get the most out of your student's lesson:

- Stay in contact with your instructor and communicate new issues, concerns, and goals.
- Ask your student's other therapists and teachers to attend a lesson and offer input (give your instructor advanced notice of this).
- Provide Lovelane with a copy of your student's IEP or 504 plan (if applicable).
- Ask questions to better understand the purpose behind activities in the arena.
- Provide any helpful feedback/input to your student's instructor that you think will help improve their lesson.
- Sometimes the instructor may find more benefit to having your student dismount early and work off of the horse in the barn. Remember, the goal is not 30 minutes on the horse, but the overall value and quality of the time spent at Lovelane.

## Safety

There is an inherent risk associated with horseback riding. That being said, Lovelane uses every precaution to provide a safe environment for your student. Safety is a top priority at Lovelane and is always at the forefront of instructors' minds. We use horse leaders and sidewalkers during lessons to support our riders depending on their needs. Instructors may end a lesson before completion if they feel the circumstances have become unsafe.

### Facility Safety Rules:

- Please wait in the Family Viewing Room (not in the arena or on the ramp) for your instructor before and during your student's lesson.
- If your student is riding in the outdoor ring, please ask a Lovelane staff member to escort you through the barn. Do not walk around the outside of the indoor arena to access the outdoor ring as it may scare the horses.
- Rider Apparel & Equipment:
  - An ASTM/SEI-certified helmet is required to be worn by all mounted riders.
  - Riders should wear appropriate riding attire including long pants (no shorts) and proper clothes for the weather
  - Riders should wear barn-appropriate footwear. Flat-soled boots with a heel are best, sneakers are also fine. (NO open-toed shoes, sandals, or crocs)
- Children must be supervised at ALL times
- Do not enter the barn or stalls, or feed unless accompanied by a Lovelane staff member.
- Anyone working near horses or mounting a horse must sign a Lovelane release form.
- Please do not use car alarms in our parking lot.
- Dogs are not permitted at Lovelane without express prior permission.
- Smoking is not allowed on the property.
- Drugs and alcohol are not allowed on the property.

# Core Program Registration Options

## Fall/Spring Weekly Rider

- 19 Lessons, with 3 make-up lessons allowed
- Individual 30-minute therapeutic lessons, every week on the same day and time with the same instructor.
- Full-time riding slot in the program.
- Weekly riders register for 19 lessons during the fall & spring sessions which are either 21 or 22 weeks long. The last 2 or 3 weeks of the session, at the student's regular day/time, are when riders are allowed to reschedule lessons that they canceled throughout the session.

## Fall/Spring Hold Rider

- 5 lessons from September to January (fall session) or from February to June (spring session), with 2 make-up lessons allowed
- Individual 30-minute therapeutic lessons at varying days/times with different instructors.
- Part-time riding slot in the program.
- Families are responsible for scheduling these lessons by connecting with the program office throughout the session.
- There may be an opportunity to purchase additional sessions after the 5 are completed if Lovelane has open slots.
- There is no credit for lessons that have not been scheduled throughout the session.

## School Year Hold Rider (10 lessons September 1 – June 30)

- 10 lessons from September to June, with 3 make-up lessons allowed
- Individual 30-minute therapeutic lessons at varying days/times with different instructors.
- Part-time riding slot in the program.
- Families are responsible for scheduling these lessons by connecting with the program office throughout the school year.
- There may be an opportunity to purchase additional sessions after the 10 are completed if Lovelane has open slots.
- There is no credit for lessons that have not been scheduled throughout the school year.

# Important Program Dates

## Sessions:

- **Summer:** July and August, make-ups available for weekly riders in the last two weeks of August
- **Fall:** September to January, make-ups available for weekly riders in the last two or three weeks of January
- **Spring:** February - June, make-ups available for weekly riders in the last two or three weeks of June
- Please note that exact dates for each session will be shared in that session's registration materials.

## Payments

- **Fall:** payment due July 31
- **Spring:** payment due December 31
- **Summer:** payment due June 15
- A \$50 late fee will apply for payments received after the due date

## Registration:

- Fall: April
- **Spring:** November
- Summer Workshops: January
- Summer Lessons: March

## Lovelane is CLOSED on the Following Holidays:

- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & The Day After
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day

## Lovelane is OPEN on the Following Holidays:

- Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur
  - Indigenous People's Day
  - Halloween
  - Veterans Day
  - Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve
  - MLK Day
  - Valentine's Day
  - President's Day
  - Good Friday & Easter Sunday
  - Mother's Day
  - Father's Day
  - Juneteenth
- If you cannot make it to your lesson on any of these days, please notify us by emailing [Cancel@lovelane.org](mailto:Cancel@lovelane.org) with as much notice as possible.

## Winter/Christmas & April Vacation Week Lessons:

Lovelane runs a modified schedule for the week between Christmas & New Year's and for April Vacation week. Lessons are available on a sign-up basis. If you do not sign up to ride during these weeks, the missed lesson will be scheduled during a makeup week, if available. Students who have already rescheduled 3 lessons will not be eligible for an additional makeup. If your student is a weekly rider and is not available to ride that week, please let us know by emailing our cancellation email: [Cancel@lovelane.org](mailto:Cancel@lovelane.org).

# Scheduling & Sessions

## Fall & Spring

For the fall, Lovelane builds the schedule based on instructor and student availability gathered in the preceding spring. Many factors are considered when assigning a student's lesson time including individual requests and preferences, best match with instructors, horse availability, the number of other riders in the ring, etc. When registering for the fall, it is imperative that a rider gives us more than one day and time to choose from in order to fit all riders into the schedule. Please note, that with approximately 100 students riding weekly, it is very difficult to change times after the schedule has been set. Be sure to be specific when requesting times. Students are asked for their availability in May, and their fall lesson slot is confirmed usually by mid-June. From fall to spring sessions, we try to keep the schedule the same as much as possible. If a student would like to change their lesson time, they may request to do so. Lovelane does the best we can to accommodate as many requests as possible; however, typically we are not able to make many changes. If a student rides weekly in the fall but is unable to maintain a weekly lesson in the spring, they can request to become a hold rider to keep their spot in the program. If they cannot ride and do not take a hold slot, then they will be replaced by another student from Lovelane's waitlist. Students who leave the program can go back on the waitlist if they are interested in returning sometime in the future.

## Summer

Our schedule and policy for the summer are different from the fall and spring sessions. We know many of our riders have busy or inconsistent summer schedules, so we offer very flexible, individualized summer options for our riders. They can choose what works best for their family:

1. Weekly Lessons (6 weeks)
2. Pick the weeks you want to ride (can be anywhere from 2-6 lessons)
3. Pay for 2 lessons to hold your spot (your student does not need to ride)
4. Horsemanship Workshop Only

All riders must participate in our summer session by choosing one of the above four options if they wish to continue riding in the fall.

As a NON-PROFIT, Lovelane constantly strives to improve our systems and increase efficiencies. Please help us be more efficient:

- Be specific when providing availability on each session's registration form and give us as many days and times as possible (more than 1 choice)
- Communicate cancellations as early as possible so that Lovelane can fill that spot with another rider
- Submit payment and registration forms by the deadline given
- Respond promptly to emails requesting information from parents
- Provide us with feedback on our communication methods
- Keep track of how many lessons your student has had and how many cancels

# COVID-19 Protocols

**Vaccination Protocol:** Lovelane strongly encourages all staff, volunteers, and students who are able to receive vaccinations for both COVID-19 and the flu. These vaccinations provide individual protection, protect the health of medically vulnerable members of our community, and help prevent outbreaks.

## Mask Protocol:

- Students are not required to wear a mask, although they are welcome to continue to do so if they choose.
- For private therapeutic riding lessons only: Parents and guardians may request that your student's instructor and volunteers wear masks during your student's lesson, and we would be happy to honor this. Please notify the Program Office in advance so they can plan accordingly.
- Staff and volunteers are not required to wear a mask but should keep a mask with them while at Lovelane, as families may request that masks be worn during lessons.

## If You Test Positive for COVID-19

- You must isolate for at least 5 days after a positive test result or onset of symptoms (day 0).
- You may return to Lovelane after 5 days, returning on day 6, provided that you:
- Are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND experienced significant improvement in other symptoms (if you have been symptomatic).
- Wear a mask for days 6 – 10, at all times, while at Lovelane.

## If You Have Been Identified as a Close Contact to Someone Who Tested Positive for COVID-19

- A close contact is defined as a person who has been within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically-compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- Individuals who have been identified as close contacts must wear a mask and monitor for symptoms through day 10 (where day 0 is the last day of exposure). Additionally, they should test on or after day 6. If symptoms develop or the individual receives a positive test result, they should self-isolate.

## Additional Protocols

- We encourage staff, students, volunteers, and visitors to stay home if they are sick to keep everyone healthy. Thank you for keeping our community safe!
- All staff, volunteers, and students must complete an Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability form.

# Adjunct Programs

## Unmounted Programs

Lovelane offers dynamic off-the-horse programs where students learn about horses and horse care in a motivating and supportive environment. These programs place students in inclusive small groups of students with and without disabilities and are open to siblings and friends of current students. Unmounted programs are a great way for the student who loves horses to spend an additional day at the barn and explore horsemanship from a different angle. Offerings include:

- **Carrot Club**: for our youngest students, ages 3 – 6, focused on social skills
- **Barn Buddies**: for students, ages 5+, focused on horse care and developing physical, emotional, and social growth
- **Horse Care Academy**: for teens and young adults, focused on horse care, building confidence and functional life skills
- **Find Your Stride**: for young adults, focused on social skills, self-advocacy, independent living, and occupational skills
- **Private Unmounted Sessions**: for students of all ages, designed for their individual needs & goals

## Summer Offerings

Lovelane offers horseback riding workshops during April and summer vacations. These workshops are a comprehensive three- or five-day experience where students have the opportunity to ride horses, have fun around the barn and stay active over the school break. In addition to riding, activities include grooming and tacking, basic horse care, horse education, arts and crafts, games, and other fun horse experiences!

Lovelane's Horsemanship Workshops are composed of four to six students with and without disabilities ages 4 years and up. They are a great opportunity for siblings or friends of Lovelane riders to join in the fun! Workshops are led by licensed riding instructors who are assisted by volunteers, ensuring that each student gets an individualized experience. Space is limited so they are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Payment is due with registration and secures your student's enrollment in the program. Registration for summer workshops is sent out in late January or early February. Registration for the April vacation workshop is sent in November.

For any questions regarding Lovelane's Adjunct Programs,

Contact the Program Coordinator: 781-259-1177 x123 or [programs@lovelane.org](mailto:programs@lovelane.org)



# Development

Lovelane is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. This means we are a tax-exempt organization and that we fundraise to support our annual operating budget of 1.1 million dollars. Forty percent of our operating budget is covered by program fees and sixty percent is reliant on fundraising efforts. Since our inception, Lovelane has maintained an unwavering commitment to our students regardless of their economic circumstances. We subsidize the cost of lessons for the majority of students and offer tuition assistance to families who otherwise can not afford our program.

- Donate
  - Consider including Lovelane in your annual charitable donations
  - Consider a gift of stocks, bonds, and shares of mutual funds
  - Check to see if your company matches employee gifts
  - Check out our Wish List and see if there is an item you would be able to donate
  - Choose to honor the memory, life, birthday or wedding of a loved one with a gift to Lovelane
- Volunteer
  - In the ring with our students
  - In the barn with our horses
  - In the office with administrative and fundraising tasks
  - Inquire about volunteering for the Susan McDaniel Run for Lovelane
  - Ask about joining the Board of Directors
  - Encourage interested friends and family to volunteer
- Events
  - Susan McDaniel Run for Lovelane (June)
    - Sign up to run or walk
    - Invite your friends and family to donate in your student's honor
    - Volunteer during the Run
  - Hoedown (Fall, held every other year)
    - Buy tickets
    - See if your company would consider sponsoring the event
    - Share the event with friends
    - Donate a high end raffle item
  - Ride for Lovelane (September)
    - Bring your horse and participate in our trail ride
    - Share the event with your barn/friends
- Community
  - Be a program ambassador and help us continue to build our community: talk to family and friends about Lovelane, tell them about your experience here, and invite them to visit the barn
  - Help us expand our community by inviting family and friends to attend Lovelane events
  - Introduce the development team to a foundation, corporation or grantor
  - Connect us to in-service and learning opportunities for our instructors
  - Host a house party to benefit Lovelane and invite your friends
  - Like Lovelane on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
  - Share information about potential great therapeutic horses for our program

- Bequests
  - Consider including Lovelane as the beneficiary of a bequest in your will.
- Services
  - Connect Lovelane with local providers that may offer discounted services (landscaping, cleaning services, snow removal)

If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact Eliza Wall, Development Director: 781-259-1177 x124 or [Eliza@lovelane.org](mailto:Eliza@lovelane.org). Visit [lovelane.org](http://lovelane.org) for upcoming events and donation information.