Horse Welfare Charter

1 Harmony Before Performance

Madrix Equestrian is founded on the principle that true horsemanship is measured not by performance alone, but by the quality of the partnership between horse and rider. Success should never come at the expense of the horse's physical comfort, mental wellbeing, or dignity.

All training, riding, and competition activities must prioritise harmony, trust, willingness, and understanding. Results, placings, scores, and awards shall always remain secondary to the horse's welfare.

A horse displaying signs of fear, distress, pain, exhaustion, resistance, or confusion shall not be pushed beyond its limits for the sake of competition. Riders are encouraged to develop their horses through patience, education, and ethical training methods that foster confidence and willing participation.

Principle: *A calm, willing horse in harmony with its rider will always be valued more highly than a winning performance achieved through force, fear, or discomfort.*

2 Welfare Pledge

By entering any Madrix Equestrian event, all participants pledge to uphold the highest standards of horse welfare.

Participants agree to:

- Place the horse's welfare above competitive success.
- Treat every horse with kindness, patience, fairness, and respect.
- Use training methods that encourage understanding rather than submission.
- Ensure horses are physically fit, healthy, and suitable for the activities they undertake.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to signs of pain, stress, discomfort, fatigue, or illness.
- Avoid any training or riding practices that may cause unnecessary fear, distress, or suffering.
- Provide appropriate nutrition, hydration, veterinary care, hoof care, and rest.
- Promote ethical horsemanship both in and out of the competition arena.

Any action deemed to compromise horse welfare may result in warnings, elimination, disciplinary action, or suspension from Madrix Equestrian activities.

3 Judge's Responsibility

Judges play an essential role in protecting horse welfare and promoting the values of ethical horsemanship.

Judges are expected to:

- Reward harmonious, willing, and relaxed performances.
- Prioritise quality of partnership over exaggerated movement or competitive ambition.
- Recognise and penalise signs of force, rough handling, intimidation, or inappropriate riding practices.
- Consider the horse's relaxation, confidence, responsiveness, and comfort as important elements of every performance.
- Intervene when horse welfare appears compromised.
- Report any concerns regarding welfare, equipment misuse, or rider conduct to the appropriate officials at Madrix.
- Maintain fairness, consistency, and impartiality while upholding the welfare standards of Madrix Equestrian.

Judges have the authority to recommend elimination or immediate review where horse welfare concerns are evident.

4 Rider's Responsibility

Every rider bears primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their horse before, during, and after competition.

Riders must:

- Present a horse that is fit, healthy, and prepared for the level of competition entered.
- Ensure tack and equipment are correctly fitted, safe, and comfortable.
- Ride with empathy, tact, patience, and self-control.
- Always consider the horse's physical and emotional limitations.
- Use aids progressively and proportionately, avoiding excessive force or repetitive correction.

- Withdraw from competition if the horse is unfit, distressed, injured, or unable to perform comfortably.
- Immediately report any welfare incident affecting their horse.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as ambassadors for ethical horsemanship.

Riders remain responsible for their horse's welfare at all times, and ignorance of welfare standards shall not be accepted as a defence for misconduct.

Guiding Principle: *The rider's first duty is to the horse. Competition is a privilege; welfare is an obligation.*

Charter Statement

Madrix Equestrian believes that the welfare of the horse must never be subordinate to competitive or commercial influences. Every decision, rule, and judging outcome shall be guided by the principle that the horse's wellbeing comes first, always.