

Associação de Equitação Adaptada Barlavento

Associação Sem Fins Lucrativos

Riding for the Disabled



Welcome letter and general information

Welcome to the Associação de Equitação Adaptada Barlavento at Quinto do Paraiso Alto, Fronteira, Bensafrim. We are officially registered in Portugal as a non-profit Riding for the Disabled organisation and are proud of our achievements and success in this valuable work in helping those who are less able than ourselves.

The work of a helper (volunteer) may on first impressions be tedious due to the repetitious nature of actions, but the repetition is important to the students and to them it is not boring. They need repetition as in some instances their memory scans are limited and they only learn by repeating actions. This repetitiveness stimulates both their mental and physical senses.

There are examples where students six months ago when they first attended would barely stand near a horse let alone get on its back. But now, they put their walking aids to one side and enjoy with confidence, the experience of being on the back of a horse knowing they are in a safe environment with help at their sides if needed.

This document is intended to provide guidelines to new helpers in order to get the most out of the RDA sessions and for existing helpers to maintain their skills. It is not intended to replace training sessions which take place periodically. There are many things to get to grips with at the RDA, so don't be afraid to ask, other volunteers will only be too pleased to help. The information below is intended to help give confidence and to eliminate accidents to all in attendance.



We currently hold three sessions per week (subject to weather, hot, wet and cold) one on a Monday, Wednesday the other on Friday. Sessions start at 10.00. Helpers are not expected to attend all sessions but are most welcome if they are able.

In the event of a session being cancelled, an email is sent out, usually by 09:00 on the morning to all helpers, so please check your email before setting out particularly if it has been or is raining. If helpers do not have email, contact will be made by phone as quickly as possible once we know the session has been cancelled.

To help at the RDA, there is no need to have any experience with disabled students or horses as training will be given, all we ask for is a little bit of your time.

Name tags are provided for helpers to wear, this is for the students benefit so they know the name of the person(s) that are helping them.

Coffee, tea, water and biscuits are provided free of charge at each session, please feel free to help yourself.

Principal contacts are:

Mondays - Robin Hewporth, telephone 965 299 402, e-mail robin@alwynmorgas10.uk

Wednesday - David Hibbert, telephone 915 090 044, e-mail djhibbo@live.co.uk

Fridays - Maddie Grossey, telephone 282 912 682, e-mail maddie2@sapo.pt

QPA stables number 282 687 596

The students that attend the sessions are from two local establishments;
NECI – Núcleo de Educação da Criança Inadaptada based just outside of Luz and
Santo Amaro a Câmara managed residential establishment based in Lagos. And E.B. 2,3 de Algoz.
Agrupamento de Escolas de Silves who send 6 Autistic students

The Ideal Helper

- Is always on time, at least ten minutes before the session begins.
- Is armed with 100% concentration, forgetting all everyday problems, and is suitably dressed. No sandals to be worn.
- Is prepared to do ANY job that they are capable of from tacking up ponies (training will be given), unloading riders from the bus, chatting to a nervous rider or welcoming a new helper.
- Is always alert when the rider is mounting the horse, ready to give a helping hand if needed but never too much. Most riders prefer to struggle and achieve rather than be manhandled into position. Help, if needed, should be given with kindness, humour and dignity.

- Is always aware of the rider's abilities, temperament and mood. Someone who has a hard time coping with a new drug, treatment or the pressures of exams will appreciate an understanding approach.
- Is aware of what the Instructor wishes to achieve for the rider, always concentrating on the Instructor's words and quietly reinforcing the message.
- Bring to the immediate attention of the RDA instructor in the schooling area or the person in charge of the session if the rider looks or is unhappy, is unsafe/unbalanced on the back of the horse or the horse itself requires attention.
- Carry out the instructions from the RDA instructor or person in charge of the session in a prompt and safe manner.

LEADING THE HORSE



- To lead the horse correctly, lead from the side of the horse's head, one hand as close to the head-collar as necessary (approx 15cm behind the horse's chin), the other hand taking up the looped length of rope. Do not wrap the rope round your hand.
- Hold the horse while your rider is mounting - stand directly in front of the horse's head holding the head collar from either side and at any other time the horse is stationary.
- Check the girth before and after mounting (providing you have had training). Adjust the stirrups to the right length.
- Listen to the Instructor at all times and make sure your rider and helpers are ready for any change of pace or direction.
- Keep the horse's movements smooth taking corners in smooth controlled curves.
- Keep a safe distance from the tail of the horse in front of you.
- Remember games are for the riders. Keep to a suitable speed with no sudden turns or stops.
- Be prepared to stop if your rider becomes unbalanced or has a problem. Any adjustments should be made off the track to allow the ride to continue.

- Must not leave the head of the horse until it is stationary and a replacement is at your side.

SIDE WALKING (help the rider)



- Normally, there will be a side walker on each side of the horse, unless instructed by the instructor.
- You are there to prevent your rider falling off. Don't hang on although you may have to help them maintain balance by placing a hand on their thigh or lower leg, or as directed by the Instructor - particularly when trotting.
- Help your rider obey the Instructor and make sure commands are understood.
- When it is time to dismount, check your rider has both feet out of the stirrups and do not allow dismounting until you or someone else is ready to help.
- Find out about your rider's problems so you will know how best to help.
- Try to keep track of what your rider does each week so you can help them to make progress.
- You are there to give confidence and prevent accidents. Allow riders as much independence as possible intervening only when necessary so that they gain the maximum benefit from each session.
- Must not leave the side of the horse until it is stationary and a replacement helper is at your side.

DIRECTIONS TO QUINTA DO PARAISO ALTO, BENSAFRIM



From the A22

Turn right at the end of the A22 into Bensafirim and go through the village heading towards Lagos. Pass the right turn to the Zoo and Barao de Sao Joao and continue towards Lagos. Take the next left turn signposted Fronteira. After a short distance the road forks

and you turn to the right. The next left turn is the road up to the stables - a narrow dirt track (signposted Quinto do Paraiso Alto)

From Lagos

From Lagos take the N120 (Bensafrim /Aljezur) road (adjacent to the McDonalds Restaurant). Keep straight on through Portelas and eventually you go under the motorway. You will pass a right hand turn to the Barragem – you need to take the next right hand turn signposted Fronteira. After a short distance the road forks and you turn to the right. The next left turn is the road up to the stables - a narrow dirt track (signposted Quinto do Paraiso Alto)

From Barao de S. Joao

From the village take the Bensafrim road past Lagos Zoo. You go under the motorway and at the T. junction turn right towards Lagos. Take the first left turn signposted Fronteira. After a short distance the road forks and you turn to the right. The next left turn is the road up to the stables - a narrow dirt track (signposted Quinto do Paraiso Alto)