**Information for schools on RDA activities**

**RDA groups re-starting**

Before getting started XXXXXXX Group has needed to ensure they have completed the RDA Checklist and Covid Risk Assessment. A copy of the ‘Are you ready’ document, corresponding checklist and our group’s Risk Assessment is enclosed.

The activities that XXXX group can offer to you are provided here: *(****Please list the activities your group can offer****)*

* Quiet corner
* Mechanical Horse sessions
* Etc.

**Advice for all parts of the UK**

* Social distancing (2M/6FT) remains a key message for everyone not from the same household and is the most effective way to protect everyone. Hand hygiene also remains a critical defence from contamination.
* When running RDA sessions groups fall within the guidelines for coaching which may hold further restrictions – see the latest RDA produced document ‘Easing of Restrictions – What it means to RDA Groups’ for further details.
* ***(England – Please delete if in Scotland or Wales)*** Due to the nature of RDA activities sessions require a number of both adult coaches and volunteers to run safely. This means we are restricted on numbers and not able to allow greater numbers of students to gather as currently permitted under government guidelines.
* ***(Scotland - Please delete if not in Scotland)*** Due to the nature of RDA activities sessions require a number of both adult coaches and volunteers to run safely. This means we will not be able to use the flexibility of the government guidelines that allow no social distancing for 11 years and under or for 12-17 year olds during sport.
* ***(Wales - Please delete if not in Wales)*** Due to the nature of RDA activities sessions require a number of both adult coaches and volunteers to run safely. This means we will not be able to use the flexibility of the government guidelines that allow no social distancing for 11 years and under.

**RDA current guidance**

Groups are able to take on new volunteers, such as those coming with a school.  If they are coming with a participant to support them in their session they need to complete a volunteer consent form and the Covid Basic Training Record.

If a group takes on new volunteers to assist in further sessions they will need to complete the usual safe recruitment process i.e. application form, references and disclosure checks.

(***Please use the below paragraph if you do not have access to a Mechanical Horse***)
New participants can only be considered at the moment for non-mounted activities e.g. Quiet Corner.  This is because it is not currently possible to do a pre-riding assessment safely. The usual application form will need to be completed, along with a participant consent form.

(***Please use the below paragraph if you do have access to a Mechanical Horse***)
New participants can only be considered at the moment for mechanical horse sessions or non-mounted activities e.g. Quiet Corner.  This is because it is not currently possible to do a pre-riding assessment safely. The usual application form will need to be completed, along with a participant consent form.

**During RDA Sessions**

*Volunteers leading and side walking in sessions*

***(Social distancing guidelines will depend where you are in the UK. Please delete the part of the information that is not relevant based on government guidance covering your area or is not covered in your group risk assessment)***

It is not normally possible to lead safely at 2M, so as our government guidelines require us to socially/physically distance at 2M it is not feasible for non-household members to lead or side walk a rider safely.

The government guidelines require us to socially/physically distance at least 1M plus mitigation. We are still unable to sidewalk within these guidelines but are able to lead with the following mitigation in place:

* ***Please list your mitigation here e.g. Leader will at all times be at least 1m away and face away from the rider***

Please note that we do not permit face coverings/ shields within sessions, see the point below about PPE and exercise.

*Use of PPE*

RDA Getting Started Guidelines state that groups should not be using PPE as a standard protocol to mitigate against the risk of Covid-19 contamination.

The evidence remains clear that the most effective way to protect yourself and others from infection is to follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face, and wash your hands regularly. Face coverings are not a substitute for these measures.

We continue to review the position regularly and take advice from the World Health Organisation, NHS, medical professionals and the British Equestrian Trade Association. Evidence suggests: -

• There is a greater risk when people use face coverings incorrectly, so increasing the risk of infection by wearing one – by repeatedly touching it for example, removing it incorrectly, reusing it or disposing of it incorrectly.
• Wearing a face covering does not protect you. However, if you are infected it may provide some protection for others.
• Face coverings have their own risks and do not replace the need for social distancing.
• Surgical masks and respirators used by healthcare and other workers should continue to be reserved for those who need them e.g. health and care workers.
• Face coverings should not be used by student under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly.
• Hot weather increases the risk of over-heating and becoming unwell.

One clear message is that face coverings should not be worn when exercising, or any activity requiring increased respiration, as they reduce the ability to breath comfortably and sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly which adds to the breathing issue and promotes the growth of microorganisms.

**Anyone mounted on a horse, or undertaking exercise (side walking, leading etc) must not wear face coverings in RDA sessions**.

Anyone attending (who isn’t mounted or exercising) may choose to wear a face covering (masks or shields) – they must always be safely secured so that they cannot be easily dislodged or removed. Face covering may cause alarm to equines if they are unsecure, brightly coloured or in any way distract from the activity taking place.

For further RDA guidance on re-starting sessions and for further updates please visit <https://www.myrda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/getting-started-after-lockdown/>