

# Oregon High School Equestrian Teams Inc.

## Organizational Goals and Affiliations

Oregon High School Equestrian Teams (OHSET) has as its main goal the recognition in the high schools of the equestrian athlete and to give them an opportunity to achieve that recognition in a fair, positive and educational format. The goals are to encourage team play, peer acceptance and good horsemanship. Competition is to follow sportsmanship guidelines as set down by Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) and the Oregon State School Board as well as the individual participating school activity guidelines and equine sportsmanship guidelines as set forth in the USEF, (formally USA EQ.).

### OHSET Code of Conduct Standards

I. All athletes participating, volunteers associated with and persons contracted with OHSET during the OHSET season, will comply with OHSET Code of Conduct Standards. (All persons associated will be called member throughout this document unless specifically identified.)

**Each Team shall take reasonable measures to insure supporters (friends, relatives, volunteers) of their Team conduct themselves according to OHSET CODE OF CONDUCT STANDARDS.**

II. **Standards of conduct will be applied in the following order:**

A. **School**

1. Athletes shall comply with the written rules of their school district, pursue the prescribed course of study, submit to lawful authority of principal, athletic or activity director, teachers, advisors and coaches and conduct themselves in an orderly fashion.
2. Notification to District Management is required when an athlete is unable to participate in an OHSET activity due to a Code of Conduct infraction with the school. Specifics are not to be documented, but the occurrence should be as it could affect additional infractions issued by either the school or OHSET. The athlete's confidentiality must be considered.

B. **OHSET**

1. When appropriate, when school code of conduct does not apply, OHSET Code of Conduct will prevail.
  - a) Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) and USEF will be utilized as guidelines when appropriate.

III. **We endorse and promote the following values and conduct in order to achieve the OHSET mission:**

- A. High expectations for students, school staffs, advisors, coaches, parents, families, volunteers, communities and spectators
- B. Strong leadership;
- C. Teamwork;
- D. Clear expectations and communications;
- E. Accountability
- F. Athlete Attire (refer to general rules 2.4 Athlete Uniform)

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- G. Lifelong learning and skill building;
- H. Recognition of, and rewards for, excellence;
- I. Community & family participation and support;
- J. Safe, orderly learning environments;

## IV. **Misconduct includes but is not limited to**

- A. Persistent failure to comply with rules, code of conduct or the directions of OHSET officials.
- B. Failure to treat other members in a courteous manner.
- C. Profane or abusive language.
- D. Theft, damage or destruction of property at an OHSET activity.
- E. Intentional cheating.
- F. Assaults or threats of harm to people, animals or property.
- G. Unlawful addictive behaviors including but not limited to narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, etc.
- H. Directions from audience while athlete is performing patterns are strongly discouraged.
- I. Abuse, misuse or neglect of equine.

1. **Article 302 of USEF (USA EQ.) has issued guidelines identifying specific cruelty and abuse acts. The following acts are included, but are not limited to:**

- a) Excessive use of a whip or spurs on any equine in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere.
- b) Any striking of the equine's head (on the poll and forward of the poll) with the whip shall be deemed excessive.
- c) Inhumane treatment of an equine in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere.
- d) Excessive jerking of hands that leads to bleeding.

2. **Cruelty – A Matter Of Perspective**

- a) Many common practices and training methods may appear abusive. Are whips, spurs and sweat the instruments of cruelty? Maybe, maybe not, depending on the observer.
  - (1) If we do not police ourselves, someone else may do it for us.
  - (2) As you train your equine remember that you are the ambassador for all of us involved with equines.
- b) Cruelty and abuse may be unintentional or a matter of degree. To determine if an action is abusive or cruel, examine your actions and ask yourself the following questions:
  - (1) Am I asking my equine to give more than it is mentally or physically capable of giving?
  - (2) Do my training methods depend on devices to achieve a "look" or quick fix?
  - (3) When I must use punishment, is it used fairly? Am I striking in anger or frustration? Am I using the lightest aid to achieve a desired action?
  - (4) Do I use pain or fear as a training method?
  - (5) What will be the long-term effect on my equine?

3. **If cruelty is reported, it will be investigated.** Appropriate action will be taken and if cruelty or abuse persists, will be reason for elimination at that event/class. \*See Violation Procedure

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## V. **These are considered minimum standards of conduct.**

- A. It is required that each Registered Team Coach/Advisor contacts their high school and get a written copy of their code of conduct.
  - 1. The written High School Code of Conduct will be discussed with athletes, parents and volunteers and included as part of signing Code of Conduct & Release form.
  - 2. If the high school does not have a written code of conduct, ask them the process utilized if an athlete, (football, basketball, etc), exhibits misconduct behaviors. Then put this process in writing, discuss it with athletes, parents and volunteers and include as a part of signing the Code of Conduct & Release form.
- B. Each advisor/coach has the right to formulate additional requirements concerning student conduct while under the direct supervision of the advisor/coach.
  - 1. It is required that expectations be written, discussed with athletes, parents and volunteers and included as part of signing Code of Conduct & Release form.

## **OHSET VIOLATION PROCEDURES**

### I. **Failure to abide by the rules, code of conduct standards or regulations of OHSET will lead to a process of confidential investigation and possible, appropriate disciplinary actions.**

- A. **Investigation:**
  - 1. Is defined as an exploration of the facts.
    - a) Individual, confidential communications is a preferred method
  - 2. Is the responsibility of the person in the leadership role, i.e. the Registered Team Coach/Advisor, District Chair or State Chair, following the appropriate Communication Expectations Policy.
- B. **Follow the school's identified process**
  - 1. This is the first line of action. Treating athletes in a like manner according to school policy is best process.
- C. **If OHSET needs to employ a disciplinary process, the action should fit the misconduct.**
- D. **Notification to District Management is required when an athlete is unable to participate in an OHSET activity due to a Code of Conduct infraction with the school.** Specifics are not to be documented but the occurrence should be documented as it could affect additional infractions issued by either the school or OHSET. The athlete's confidentiality must be considered.
  - 1. Our organizational goals include providing an "opportunity to achieve in a fair, positive and educational format".
  - 2. **Documentation of disciplinary actions is required.**
    - a) Including present misconduct, disciplinary action and plan for improvement as well as action if any misconduct occurs again
    - b) **Signatures of immediate involved parties are required**
      - (1) Athlete or team
      - (2) Registered Team Coach/Advisor, District Chair or State Chair, whoever is managing the process
    - c) **Give copies to involved parties.**

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3. It is recommended that actions that include or are similar to removing of points or disqualification, when considered, be discussed with the District Chair. Actions that include suspension or expulsion, when considered, should be discussed with the District Chair and the State Chair to maintain standards of practice.
4. **First violations, may include disciplinary actions such as:**
  - a) Discussion, plan of action for improvement
  - b) Loss of points for Athlete and/or Team.
  - c) Disqualification for Athlete or Team.
    - (1) Disqualification from a class
    - (2) Suspension from a meet
5. **Second violations, may include disciplinary actions such as:**
  - a) Disqualification for athlete or team.
    - (1) Disqualification from a class
    - (2) Suspension from present meet
    - (3) Suspension from next meet
  - b) Expulsion from OHSET
6. **Third violation may include disciplinary actions such as:**
  - a) Disqualification for athlete or team.
    - (1) Suspension from present meet & next meet
  - b) Expulsion from OHSET

## II. **Reinstatement from suspension/disqualification/expulsion of athlete or team process:**

- A. For first violations only. There is no reapplication/reinstatement process available for second or third violations.
- B. OHSET athlete may apply for reinstatement after a first violation if the following has been complied with:
  1. Letter of request for reinstatement from member
  2. For drug, alcohol, tobacco, or other addictive behaviors violations, a documented counseling and/or a course of treatment
  3. Written approval by Registered Team Advisor and/or coach
- C. Approval of continued participation needs to include the same persons involved in the suspension or disqualification process.
  1. Either party may request District and/or State Chair to participate.