



PONY CLUB



ACHIEVEMENT BADGES

SAFE TO PLAY

Advanced Achievement Badge

Learning Objectives

To understand what the 'Safe to Play' campaign is, how to spot when something doesn't feel right and what they can do to keep themselves and others safe in equestrian sport.

Syllabus

- 1 Watch the Safe to Play campaign video and explore how abuse can happen in equestrian sport, how it might feel and what signs to look out for
- 2 Work through real-life scenarios to practice spotting unsafe situations and deciding what to do
- 3 Learn how to use the Safe to Play website and understand how to report concerns or get help

Teaching Ideas and Resources

1 Watch and reflect

The Safe to Play campaign is aimed at ensuring everyone is able to keep children and themselves safe from harm. Watch the Safe to Play campaign video (<https://vimeo.com/891096598>), showing how a young rider is gradually groomed and abused by someone in a position of trust (her instructor).

Remind everyone that the content may be difficult so members should take a break whenever they need to.

Questions to discuss as a group:

How do you think Chloe felt when she first arrived at the riding school?

- ▶ Encourage members to think about how someone might feel starting at a new place (nervous, excited, shy)
- ▶ Highlight that new situations can make people more vulnerable to unwanted attention or influence
- ▶ Link this to why creating a safe, welcoming environment matters

What were some early signs that the instructor's behaviour wasn't right?

- ▶ Prompt them to recall specific movements (e.g. special treatment, private conversations, driving her to competitions alone)

Why do you think Chloe found it hard to tell someone what was happening?

- ▶ Acknowledge feelings like fear, shame, confusion, or not wanting to get someone in trouble
- ▶ Talk about the power imbalance between adults and young people
- ▶ Emphasise that it's never a child's fault and that help is always available

How could other people at the yard (like other riders, parents, or staff) have helped?

- ▶ Look for missed opportunities by adults and peers (e.g. not noticing changes in behaviour, not asking questions)
- ▶ Encourage members to think about being observant and kind to others
- ▶ Reinforce the importance of reporting concerns, even if they're small

If you were worried about a friend being treated badly, what would you do?

- ▶ Give space for personal responses but guide them towards safe, proactive steps (e.g. talking to a trusted adult, Safeguarding Officer, or using Safe to Play to report a concern)
- ▶ Validate that it's brave and responsible to speak up
- ▶ Reassure them they don't need proof to report a worry

What do you think the riding school could have done differently to keep Chloe safe?

- ▶ Safeguarding posters, staff training, clear reporting routes, better supervision for children
- ▶ Encourage members to think about what their own centre/yard currently do and what they could do better

Why is it important that we talk about situations like this, even if they feel uncomfortable?

- ▶ Encourage them to see how sharing experiences can raise awareness and prevent future harm
- ▶ Reinforce that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just adults'
- ▶ End with a positive message: speaking up can change things for the better.

A follow-up video showing Chloe after the safeguarding concern had been handled correctly (<https://vimeo.com/877080300>) can be played following discussion to reinforce what should happen when support is given, and the right steps are taken.

A second video, showing Chloe's friend reflecting on the situation (<https://vimeo.com/891081639>) can be played to highlight how friends might notice when something's not right and what they can do to help or speak up.

2 Scenario discussions

As a group, read some safeguarding scenarios and decide what should happen next.

Scenario 1

During a training session, you see a coach pat your friend on the bottom as she dismounts her pony. Later, you see them alone together in the lorry park. The coach has his arm round your friend. As he leaves, you see her blowing kisses at him and giggling.

As a group, discuss what you would do in that situation, and what the centre should do.

- ▶ Give space for personal responses but guide them towards safe, proactive steps (e.g. talking to a trusted adult, Safeguarding Officer, or using Safe to Play to report a concern)
- ▶ Highlight that it is important that everyone on a yard or at a competition supports Safe to Play by following best practice
- ▶ Reinforce that the coach's role is a position of trust - in the same way a teacher at a school cannot have a relationship with a pupil, a coach cannot have an intimate relationship with a child
- ▶ Discuss instances in which physical contact from a coach may be required (e.g. assisting when mounting/dismounting, coaching to develop skills or technique or treating an injury)
- ▶ Reinforce that physical contact should meet the needs of the child, have participants agreement and think about the circumstances and how it may be interpreted

To summarise, play the following videos:

- ▶ Safe to Play 'Physical contact' video (<https://vimeo.com/915577855>)
- ▶ Safe to Play 'Who can I talk to' Video (<https://vimeo.com/915580358>)

Scenario 2

At the Pony Club Championships, you have been selected to be part of the Showjumping team. Your times are late in the day so you have the chance to watch everyone else's rounds. Sam, who said to you earlier that she was pretty nervous as the fences looked massive, misses out a fence in the course. From the other side of the ring, you can hear her dad shouting and swearing at Sam. You can see that Sam is crying as she leaves the ring and rides straight past you all and heads back to the stables.

As a group, discuss what you would do in that situation.

- ▶ Give space for personal responses but guide them towards safe, proactive steps (e.g. talking to a trusted adult or Safeguarding Officer and checking that Sam is okay)
- ▶ Highlight that this may be an isolated incident, however this behaviour is inappropriate from any spectator or participant and Sam's wellbeing should be the primary concern

- ▶ Reassure members that no one should be spoken to this way, regardless of the circumstances
- ▶ Discuss the Code of Conduct and why it needs to be followed by everyone in equestrian sport

Scenario 3

As you walk back to your lorry, your phone pings and there are a few negative comments in your group chat as Sam's elimination has put a lot of pressure on the rest of you to do well.

As a group, discuss what you would do in that situation.

- ▶ Give space for personal responses but guide them towards safe, proactive steps (e.g. talking to a trusted adult if they feel pressured, nervous, scared)
- ▶ Encourage members to keep in mind that once you put something online, it can be there forever
- ▶ Discuss how Sam may feel if she found out that others were posting negative comments about her performance
- ▶ Encourage members to think about being observant and kind to others

Scenario 4

You are taking your YELA and are volunteering at the local stables. They have asked if you could help out in the lead-rein lesson. You are leading a 12-year-old girl who is just learning to ride. During one of the sessions, you notice she has marks on her arms, and it looks like she has been cutting herself.

As a group, discuss what you would do in that situation.

- ▶ Give space for personal responses but guide them towards safe, proactive steps (e.g. talking to a trusted adult, Safeguarding Officer, or using Safe to Play to report a concern)
- ▶ Validate that it's brave and responsible to speak up
- ▶ Reassure them they don't need proof to report a worry
- ▶ Reinforce the importance of reporting concerns, even if they're small
- ▶ Explain that reporting this to the Safeguarding Officer means they will be able to talk to the child about what you have noticed, as well as talk to the parents and get further advice and help from Children's Services if needed

2 Safe to Play campaign

Look through the Safe to Play website, either as a group or individually on their own devices, learning how to report a concern and where to get help if something feels wrong.

- ▶ Look through available resources (e.g. videos, FAQs)
- ▶ Explain how to report a concern via the Safe to Play website
- ▶ Encourage members to bookmark the page for easy access in future

Questions

- 1 What are some early signs that someone may be trying to build an unsafe or inappropriate relationship with a young person?
- 2 Why might someone find it hard to tell any adult if they are being harmed?
- 3 What is the Safe to Play campaign, and why is it important?
- 4 Who can you talk to if you're worried about yourself or your friend at Pony Club?
- 5 What can riding centres or clubs do to help keep everyone safe?
- 6 What should you do if you're unsure whether a situation is safe or not?

Answers

- 1 They might give them special attention, isolate them from others, ask them to keep secrets, offer gifts, or message them privately outside of normal club activities.
- 2 They might feel scared, confused, embarrassed, or worried they won't be believed or they will get someone in trouble.
- 3 It is a campaign that is aimed at ensuring everyone is able to keep children and themselves from

harm. It helps young people understand safeguarding in equestrian sport and gives advice on how to get help if something feels wrong.

- 4 A Safeguarding Officer, coach, parents, or another trusted adult.
- 5 They can have clear safeguarding policies, make sure staff are trained, display who their Safeguarding Officer, create safe spaces to speak up, and make sure everyone knows the rules and boundaries.
- 6 Talk to a trusted adult or Safeguarding Officer – it's always better to speak up, even if you're not completely sure.

Coach Guidance Notes – Safe to Play Advanced Achievement Badge

Who should complete this?

This Advanced Achievement Badge includes activities and video clips which are designed for participants aged 14+, covering the concepts of safeguarding in equestrian sport in an age-appropriate and interactive way. It is recommended that participants have completed the Safe to Play Achievement Badge.

Format

The badge can be completed through discussions as a group or using the PDF answer worksheets. If using the PDF answer worksheets in a group, each individual should be given time to fill in their answers on their own and then encouraged to share their answers with the group, should they feel comfortable to do so.

Young people can complete this as a badge activity at their branch with support from a qualified coach who has completed their Safeguarding for Equestrians training or as part of their YELA programme. The group/young person should feel comfortable with the adult chosen to deliver the activity. These activities can be done in one session, or over a few weeks to fit around the branch badge rally programme.

What resources do I need?

- ▶ Printed copies of the answer worksheets (if being used)
- ▶ Laptop or other media to play the videos

What do I need to do before the session?

- ▶ Parental/carers consent for this activity must be obtained before the child attends the session. You can download and share these activities with the parent/carers if needed prior to the badge rally
- ▶ Explain to the young person why they are doing this badge
- ▶ Signpost to support if you think their wellbeing may be affected by the activities
- ▶ If the young person has any additional needs, talk with them and/or their parents/carers about what adjustments they might need to complete the activities

During the activities

You will need to check their answers and signpost to support where needed.

After all the activities in the workbook have been completed:

- ▶ Check that they have understood the content.
- ▶ Answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ Check that they have not been triggered or upset by the content. If necessary, signpost to support.

Key messages to reinforce

- ▶ They have the right to feel safe all the time
- ▶ They have a part to play in keeping themselves and others safe.
- ▶ If they ever feel upset, worried or unsafe, there are people they can talk to who will listen and help.