

## The Pony Club Guidelines on whisker trimming

A number of national and international organisations have banned trimming of whiskers in competition horses on the basis that this reduces the horse's sensory ability. The Pony Club supports these bans and would like to see natural, untrimmed whiskers on all horses and ponies at Pony Club events. All Pony Club officials are encouraged to educate members and their parents about the importance of leaving whiskers untrimmed.

**Whisker trimming is strongly discouraged within Pony Club**

### Why are whiskers important to horses?

Horses' whiskers are long, specialised hairs that grow from the muzzle and around the eyes. Research on horses and other animals suggests that they provide horses with important information about their surroundings, helping them to:

- Know how far objects are from their muzzle and eyes
  - This helps to protect their muzzle and eyes from injury
- Feel what is on the ground
  - This helps them to avoid eating objects that could be harmful
- Understand and feel safe in their environment
  - Whiskers may be the only way horses have of knowing what is in the 'blind spots' in front of their faces and under their noses.

### Which organisations have banned trimming whiskers?

Trimming of whiskers has been banned by the FEI, the German, Swiss, and French national equestrian federations, British Dressage, British Eventing, and a number of shows and breed societies in the UK.



### Why does Pony Club support these bans?

Whiskers are usually trimmed purely for cosmetic reasons, to make a horse look 'neater'. However, research suggests that trimming a horse's whiskers is detrimental to its wellbeing and welfare. For this reason, the Pony Club supports this ban.

### For more information see:

British Horse Society. (2021) [Sensory hairs](#).

Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI). (2021) [2022 Veterinary Regulations](#) (sees Article 1004).

Lesté-Lasserre, C. (2020) [Scientists, federations applaud FEI whisker shaving ban](#).

McGreevy, P. (2012) [Equine behaviour. A guide for veterinarians and equine scientists. Second Edition](#). Elsevier Health Sciences., p.49.