



Fermanagh Harriers Branch of the Pony Club

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

8 March 2024

Welcome to the Fermanagh Harriers Branch of the Pony Club

Welcome!

Welcome to Fermanagh Harriers Branch of the Pony Club! Whether you are a new member or you have been part of our Branch for some time, we are delighted to have you on board.

The Pony Club is a great organisation and provides many opportunities for fun, learning and competition with your pony and allows you and your family to make new friendships with like-minded people.

This handbook will provide you with the key information about activities in the Branch and how the Branch and The Pony Club is run. We hope this will serve as a reference point in the future to signpost you in the right direction when needed, for any queries you may have.

If you have any queries at any stage, please contact myself, or any member of the committee who will be happy to assist. Remember there is no such thing as a silly question!

Now that you are a member you can wear your pony club tie and badge with pride – you belong to a very large voluntary youth organisation, known for its courtesy, consideration, good sportsmanship, self-discipline and loyalty.

Wishing you lots of fun and friendship in your Pony Club journey with Fermanagh Harriers Branch.

Frances Rolston Bruce

District Commissioner (DC)

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Welcome

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1. About The Pony Club

The Pony Club is the largest association of riders in the world, and our Branch is one of almost 350 across the UK. The Pony Club also has Branches right across the world.

1.2 Objectives:

- To encourage young people to ride and to learn to enjoy all kinds of sports connected with horses and riding.
- To give instruction in riding and horsemanship and to educate Members to look after and to take proper care of their animals.
- To promote the highest ideals of sportsmanship, citizenship and loyalty to create strength of character and self-discipline.

1.3 Key Facts:

- The Pony Club was formed in 1929 and was granted charitable status in 1997.
- The Pony Club celebrated its 90th Birthday in 2019.
- The Pony Club is the fourth biggest youth organisation in the country.
- The Pony Club is the biggest equestrian youth organisation in the world.
- There are 110,000 members in 18 countries across the globe, in addition to nearly 50,000 members in the UK spread through 344 Branches and over 570 Centres.
- The overwhelming majority of leading international riders and Olympians both past and present spent their formative years in Pony Club.
- The Pony Club is a training organisation and is the only equestrian organisation to cover every discipline including Show Jumping, Dressage, Eventing, Tetrathlon, Mounted Games, Endurance, Polo, Polocrosse and Pony Racing.

1.4 How Pony Club Works

Membership is open to all young people up until the end of the calendar year in which the Member reaches 25 years of age. Subscriptions are renewed annually.

Each Branch is self-contained and administered by voluntary, unpaid District Commissioner(s) known as the DC, assisted by a Branch Committee. A proportion of each Member's annual subscription is retained by The Pony Club Office to cover insurance and administration costs.

Pony Club insurance is operative 24/7 and covers accidental damage to a third party. Personal injury cover is not included.

The UK Branches of the Pony Club are grouped into 19 Areas. We are in Area 17. (There are also other Pony Club branches around the world). Each area is administered by an Area Representative.

The Pony Club employs a Chief Executive and administrative staff who deal with the day to day running of the club.

2. About Our Branch

2.1 History of the Branch

The Fermanagh Harriers Branch of the Pony Club was formed in 1956 when a few interested individuals came together in Fermanagh to create an opportunity for local children to have instruction and attend horse and pony rallies and competitions. Activities frequently took place on the Broadmeadow in Enniskillen (now the Forum playing fields). In the late 1970s, the Fermanagh Harriers Branch took a lease on the arena at Lackaboy, and this remained the Branch's base for over 25 years. The annual Pony Club camp was also held at various venues, including Crocknacrieve near Ballinamallard, Snowhill near Lisbellaw and Blessingbourne Estate, outside Fivemiletown. When the Council developed the facilities at Necarne, in the 1990s the annual camp and Branch base was relocated there, up until the closure of these facilities in 2012. Thereafter the Equine College facilities at CAFRE were used for camp, and rallies were held at various venues across the county. The re-opening of Necarne as Castle Irvine in 2021, just after the covid pandemic enabled the Branch to return again for annual camp and many rallies.

Over the years, the Branch has benefited from a combination of voluntary and paid instructors, and members have represented the Branch at Area Competitions, and also at both Irish and National Championships. Much of the Branch history is kept alive through the annual awarding of perpetual trophies and cups which were presented to the Branch over the years.

Whilst there have been many changes during the life of the Branch, the fundamentals of the Branch have remained unchanged, in that quality training is provided, supported by opportunities to take tests and compete, within an environment of fun and friendship.

2.2 The Voluntary Committee

The Branch is run in accordance with requirements laid down by The Pony Club by a voluntary committee. Each of these committee members contribute their time to support Branch activities for the good of the Branch as a whole. Please remember that all committee members have full time jobs and family commitments so please be respectful of their time and sanity 😊

If you've forgotten a date, or have a general query, please check the website first to try to resolve the issue before contacting Frances or Denise.

Committee Members are:

Frances Rolston Bruce – District Commissioner

Denise Owens – Branch Secretary

Ursula McDonald – Branch Treasurer

Debbie Black – Committee Member

John Hutchinson – Committee Member

Roisin Cathcart – Committee Member

Ruth Moore - Committee Member

Karin Lilly - Committee Member

2.3 Fundraising and Events Sub-Committee

In late 2022, in order to try and spread the workload, a new sub-committee was appointed. This sub-committee takes a lead role in fundraising for the Branch. They are also tasked with supporting arrangements for specific Branch events. Fundraising is an important factor, which helps us to keep the fees for Branch activities as low as possible.

2.4 Parental Support

As explained, the Branch is run by volunteers. There are always lots of 'jobs' to be done, and we therefore need the support of parents and older members to run the Branch effectively. Please offer your help, particularly when we run bigger events and competitions. No equine experience is necessary. Helping with providing catering, picking up droppings from an arena, manning a gate to allow riders through one at a time are all duties that can be carried out by anyone. If everyone does a little bit, it helps to share the burden out. We often use the Sign Up website to post jobs and enable parents to volunteer for duties, so keep an eye out for emails about this.

2.5 A Year in Fermanagh Harriers Branch of the Pony Club

In order to deliver on our objectives, we hold various activities over the course of the year. A typical year in the Branch is outlined below— members can participate in as many of the activities as they wish and we encourage everyone to 'have a go' at as much as possible! We utilise various facilities across the county, and many of our activities take place at Castle Irvine Estate in Irvinestown. We also travel to other venues across Northern Ireland for various rallies and competitions.

Many of our rallies run in three-week blocks to allow for continuity of progress but we also hold one off sessions, and events such as fun hacks and mounted picnic rides; these are a lovely way to catch up with other members in a relaxed setting.

January/February

- Unmounted stable management rallies.
- Tetrathlon training & winter triathlons
- Flatwork/Polework Rallies
- Area Quiz
- Road Rider Training

March/April

- Mounted Rallies.
- Pony Club Games training.
- Easter full day rally.
- Branch tetrathlons.
- Cross Country (XC) Training.

May/June

- Mounted Rallies
- Area Mounted Games Competition.
- Cross Country (XC) training .

July/August

- Pony Club Camp
- Area Competitions (Event/Dressage/SJ/Tetrathlon, see Section 2.13 for details)
- Mounted training rallies
- Home Championships (one day event: dressage, SJ, XC)

September/October

- Training for Efficiency Tests
- Forest hack & picnic
- Flatwork & SJ rallies
- Efficiency Test Day

November/December

- Indoor Rallies
- Winter Indoor SJ League
- Annual Christmas Show and SJ League Final
- Christmas rally
- Prize Night & Party

2.6 Our Activities

2.6.1 What is a Rally?

A Pony Club rally is established as the backbone of The Pony Club. Rallies can take the form of a practical riding lesson, unmounted stable management session or a combination of the two. Throughout the year, mounted rallies take place regularly and are usually grouped in a series of three weekly sessions to allow for structured continuity and progress. These can take place mid-week in the evenings or during the day at weekends and we usually try to vary the day to try to work around competition dates or other commitments members will have. “Day Rallies” are held a couple of times a year during school holidays and are a full day of teaching both ridden and stable management sessions with plenty of time to enjoy a picnic and catch up with friends.

Rallies represent excellent value for money whilst you learn and develop your riding and pony care skills. We do not run rallies specifically to raise funds, but they are organised to cover their costs.

All our training and activities are very practically based and geared towards the level and age group being taught. We are always conscious that some children may have additional needs that we should be aware of, and we would encourage parents to let us know any relevant details so that we can make their Pony Club days as enjoyable and productive as possible. Any information shared will always be treated in the strictest of confidence. This also applies to any medical needs or relevant conditions.

2.6.2 What is Stable Management?

Stable management is simply a term to cover all aspects of caring for your pony and making sure it is healthy, happy and safe. It ranges from feeding, grooming, tack care and knowledge, first aid and caring for your pony in the stable or at grass. The Pony Club has an excellent structured programme

of learning and begins with simple training for the youngest members right up to internationally recognised professional level qualifications for senior members through the Pony Club Test system.

2.6.3 Booking a place for rallies or events

Places at most rallies and events are open to all of our Branch members but must be booked by the relevant closing date so that we can get instructors and facilities in place. Please try to book as far ahead of time as possible as a lot of work goes into planning rallies.

All bookings are done through our website and events will close automatically on the stated closing date. We are conscious that the PC booking system is not always user friendly. It will be replaced soon, but in the meantime we will continue to use the Unity system, which does function satisfactorily. Payments are taken through PayPal. Please note that it is easier to use the system on a laptop or larger screen than trying to do it on a mobile phone where possible. Even if an event is free, you must still book so that we know the numbers attending.

The bookings page can be found at <https://branches.pcuk.org/fermanagh/whats-on/bookings-page/>

Rally times and ride details will be posted in the “[Members Only](#)” section of the Branch website 24-48hrs before the event. For child protection purposes, this section is password protected - a password will be sent to you by email and MUST NOT be shared outside the Branch.

Rides: Members will be allocated their group or “ride” based on a number of factors, these include but are not limited to; age, maturity, technical knowledge and theoretical proficiency, ability of pony, efficiency tests held, number of riders booked and a range of other things. Sometimes a child will be at the “top” of a group and at other times the “bottom”, over a period of time this levels itself out and is the nature of Pony Club. Considerable care is given to make sure children are appropriately grouped and it is the parent’s responsibility to be realistic, manage children’s expectations and to encourage them in their learning. All Pony Club members will learn something at each rally no matter what level of counterparts are in their group.

Weather

In the main, we run in most weather conditions and members are encouraged to ensure they have waterproof clothing, a change of clothes or sun protection as appropriate.

2.6.4 Rally Checklist.

Although there may be specific requirements depending on the discipline being undertaken, below is a general guide which will apply to most rallies. We understand new members may not have everything on the list however there are a few items which are necessary for safety reasons, but you do not need to go out and purchase a whole new wardrobe!

Rider

Riding Hat- must be of the current Pony Club standard ([click here](#)) and well fitting. Hats must be worn with the strap correctly fitted at **ALL** times when mounted without exception. The DC (Frances) or Secretary (Denise) will check that hats meet the necessary standard and apply a coloured hat tag to show that it complies. Please ask for your hat to be tagged if not already completed.

Riding Boots- Standard riding or jodhpur boots with a fairly smooth, thin sole and a well-defined square cut heel should be worn. Plain black or brown half chaps may be worn with jodhpur boots of

the same colour. Tassels and fringes are not allowed. No other footwear will be permitted, including wellington boots, “muckers” or trainers. Boots with magnetic or interlocking treads are not permitted, nor are the boots or treads individually.

Gloves – strongly recommended for riding and leading your pony.

Clothing- Plain, preferably light coloured jodhpurs or breeches should be worn, with a Branch sweatshirt or polo shirt. Other kit items such as jackets and soft shells are also available. Further details on Branch kit are at section 2.12. The [Kit Orders](#) Page of our website outlines how various items of kit can be ordered. For safety reasons, hooded jackets are strictly not allowed for riding.

Hair- Long hair just be tied back securely, in a safe manner to limit the risk to hair being caught and prevent scalp injuries. Hairnets for long hair are advised.

Body Protector – Compulsory for cross country riding. If a Body protector is worn for any Pony Club activity it must meet the current Pony Club Standard – [click here](#).

Jewellery – Only a wristwatch and stock pin are permitted. With the exception of medical bracelets, necklaces and bracelets must be removed to stop risk of injury. Any body piercings should ideally be removed before going near your horse or pony. Earrings are not permitted. If you must continue to wear piercings as a medical device, they must be covered with tape or plaster so that they are protected and secure.

Whip – if carried, it must meet the Current PCUK whip rule - [click here](#).

Your Pony

Pony Health and Safety – Ponies attending rallies should be healthy, clean and tidy, and hooves should be well trimmed/no loose shoes if shod. It is a good idea to arrive in plenty of time for a rally to allow time to get tacked up and be ready to ride at the allotted time.

Vaccinations – All ponies attending pony club must be vaccinated against Equine Influenza and accompanied by their passport showing their up-to-date vaccination record. You may be asked to submit a copy of your pony’s vaccination record on their passport to the DC. A copy of the current Vaccination Rule is posted on the [Rules and Info section](#) of our website.

Bridle – must be clean and well fitting. Specific rules will apply to various disciplines in terms of bridles and bits, particularly in dressage, but for rallies most “usual” tack is permitted. Please ask if you are unsure.

Saddle- should be clean, well fitting and in a good state of repair. Saddlecloth or numnah must also be clean.

Stirrups - stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the rider’s boots. They must have 7mm (¼”) clearance (one fingers width) on either side of the widest part of the boot . This is to prevent a foot becoming trapped in a stirrup iron in the event of a fall. Magnetic or interlocking stirrups are not permitted. Specific guidance per sport may be applicable, please see the rulebooks for additional information.

Grass Reins and Balanced Support Reins- these can be very useful for small kids who are not strong enough to stop their pony putting its head down to eat or stretch. These are permitted at Pony Club rallies and competitions jumping up to 50cm or Walk and Trot Dressage Tests. There are a few

restrictions to be aware of when fitting and these are shown in the various rule books for each discipline on the [PC website](#) or see the Grass Reins / Balance Support Reins Rule by [clicking here](#).

Haynet & Water – particularly when travelling a long distance or for a full day rally.

Grooming kit & hoof pick.

If any tack or equipment is deemed to be unsafe, ill-fitting or unsuitable, an instructor or official will aim to help you as far as possible. Our instructors are a great source of knowledge so please feel free to ask any questions at a suitable time.

2.6.5 Conduct at Pony Club Activities

It is a good idea to arrive in plenty of time for a rally to allow yourself time to get tacked up and ready to ride at your allotted time.

If your pony is green, or if you have any concerns about your pony's behaviour within a group lesson, please email the Branch so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure safety of members and ponies.

In the main, parents are requested to stay at the venue during mounted activities. This is mandatory for younger children. For older members, we ask that parents advise the rally organiser if they are leaving the venue for any reason.

Parents must not interfere in the rally once it has begun. Instructors are there to teach the riders unhindered. Parents, unless leading, are not permitted to be inside the arena while the lesson is in progress.

Courtesy is paramount and members should remember to thank the instructor and rally organiser before leaving a rally.

Parents should offer to help with equipment, e.g moving jumps/poles before the lesson has begun or at the request of the instructor, lifting droppings between rides/at the end of a rally etc. Parents are also requested to take their turn at bringing the tea box so that instructors who are teaching, often for several hours at a time, can be offered refreshments.

2.6.6 Pony Club Camp

Pony Club Camp is the highlight of the year for many pony clubbers and our branch is no different. Camp is held over four days during the school summer holidays. For the past few years we have used Castle Irvine Estate in Fermanagh. Here is a quick snapshot of what is involved:-

- Camp duration is four days.
- Ponies are stabled at Castle Irvine Estate for camp.
- Members attend camp each day – younger members go home at night, and older members can stay on designated nights if they wish.
- Parents must complete and return a medical form ahead of camp. Parents must sign their child(ren) in and out of camp at the start and end of each day.
- Riders are grouped into rides and each ride is allocated an instructor for the duration of camp.

- Two hours of riding instruction is given per day along with two hours of stable management.
- There are usually fun evening activities on two of the evenings when the formal part of camp is over for the day, including a family BBQ.
- Parents will need to be available to assist younger children during the day if they are unable to tack up or handle their pony independently.
- Catering is on a rota basis and each family will help to provide some snacks/meals for the campers.
- On the last day of camp, Pony Club tests or badges may be examined in the morning and there is a show in the afternoon followed by prizegiving.
- There are rides from tiny tot lead rein up to senior riders and activities are tailored to the level of participants.
- Camp is also a great opportunity to get to know other Pony Club parents, aunts, grannies, grandpas and siblings and there are plenty of jobs for everyone to help out with whether horsey or not.

2.6.7 Day Trips and Excursions

Over the years we have taken our members on a number of day trips without the ponies. In 2022 we visited the Irish National Stud in Kildare on a bus trip and have also travelled to Tattersalls International Horse Trials in County Meath. Keep an eye out for upcoming events as we usually try to plan something each year if possible.

2.7 Pony Club Instructors (Coaches)

The Pony Club has a strict and rigorous approach to approving Pony Club Instructors and Coaches. All coaches used by our Branch must have appropriate equine/teaching qualifications, safeguarding qualifications and be Access NI checked. They must also have a current registration as a coach on the Pony Club Coach Database. All of the coaches that we use meet these requirements. Whilst the majority of coaches are paid for their services, occasionally coaches provide coaching to Branch members on a voluntary basis.

2.8 Parents/Carers Roles/Responsibilities in Pony Club

There are a number of things parents can do to support their child's development in the Branch and Pony Club

- Help riders to be prepared for Pony Club activities.
- Label as much kit, tack and clothing as possible.
- Encourage independence relevant to age and ability (eg cleaning tack, tacking up)
- Promote good manners including always thanking the organiser and instructor at the end of a ride or rally.
- Encourage riders to ask and answer questions in lessons, as it can be daunting at the start for some children.
- Volunteer as much as possible within the Branch, and also at competitions. Even if you are new to ponies and Pony Club there are plenty of opportunities whatever your skills. If your child

will be competing in any of the Area competitions, you may be expected to volunteer help as a condition of entry so be prepared for this (previous horse experience not necessary!

- Be a positive role model for your child and other members.
- Respect coaches, officials, volunteers, members and other parents.
- Remember that the main aim of The Pony Club is to teach fairness over competitiveness, and well-being over winning.
- Teach members to show sportsmanship, teamwork and supportiveness.
- Use appropriate conduct at all times, including on social media channels.

The Parents Code of Conduct is available [here](#). It is issued annually for review for signing by all parents/guardians. If a parent has an issue, please speak with the DC or other official in charge at the earliest opportunity in an appropriate setting. . We also respectfully remind all members and parents that our officials are volunteers and are doing their best for the Branch within the constraints of the facilities and time available and have their own jobs, families and ponies to manage as well.

2.9 Members' Responsibilities

Pony Club is a fantastic opportunity for members to learn, have fun and make friends – make the most of your time in Pony Club!

Members, make sure and help your fellow Pony Clubbers! Not everyone is having a good day all the time, and a friendly smile or offer to help can make a huge difference. Make sure also to try and do as much as you can safely do yourself with your pony. This can include:-

- Grooming
- Tacking up
- Mucking out the horsebox or tidying away your tack when you get home.
- Take part in as many different Pony Club activities as you can, especially those you may find challenging. Play an active part in your branch.
- It can be tricky at first, especially if you don't know many members but before long you will have made lots of new friends of all ages who share your love of ponies.

Most importantly, don't forget to say a big thank-you to your instructor and whoever is bringing you to Pony Club each time!

The Members Code of Conduct is available [here](#). It is issued annually for review for signing by all members.

2.10 Pony Club Achievement Badges

As part of our objectives as a training organisation, we offer the opportunity to all members to work towards Pony Club Achievement Badges. There are various levels of achievement badges and topics include both equine and non-equine subjects. When members receive an achievement badge, this can be sewn into the Pony Club sweatshirt. The Mini Achievement Badges are targeted towards our younger members, and offer a fun way to gain more knowledge. The Achievement Badges for older members also provide opportunities for widening knowledge and skills, and provide building blocks towards Pony Club Tests – see section 2.10.

Further details on achievement badges are available on the [PCUK website](#).

2.11 Pony Club Tests

The Pony Club Training structure encourages members to take tests which enables them to learn progressively about horse and pony care and riding. The tests are optional, and are designed with certain objectives in mind - see below for the order in which tests are taken. When you achieve a test, you are entitled to wear the appropriate circle of coloured felt underneath your Pony Club Badge

E Standard – Pale Yellow Felt

Objectives: To enjoy learning about ponies • To be safe near ponies • To understand what a pony needs to be happy • To be confident both on and around ponies • To know the basic points of the pony. Minimum age: 4 years old

D Standard – Yellow Felt

Objectives: To achieve confidence in handling a pony • To achieve confidence in riding a pony • To enjoy learning about ponies • To have a basic understanding of pony behaviour • To know that it is important that ponies are healthy and enjoy life • To have an awareness of how ponies learn. Minimum age: 8 years old.

D+ Standard – White Felt

Objectives: To understand that equine welfare is important • To have some knowledge of the Five Freedoms (Domains) and why they are essential for a pony's welfare • To have an awareness of ponies' instincts and how they affect their behaviour • To understand how a pony learns • To have a knowledge of the care and working of a pony off grass • To be working towards a secure correct, balanced seat independent of the reins and to understand why this is important • To apply simple aids correctly • To be in control of the pony on the roads and in the countryside • To understand why there are rules for riding in the countryside. Minimum age: 10 years old.

C Standard – Green Felt

Objectives: To understand that equine welfare is important • To have some knowledge of the Five Freedoms (Domains) and why they are essential for a pony's welfare • To have an awareness of ponies' instincts and how they affect their behaviour • To understand how a pony learns • To have a knowledge of the care and working of a pony off grass • To be working towards a secure correct, balanced seat independent of the reins and to understand why this is important • To apply simple aids

correctly • To be in control of the pony on the roads and in the countryside • To understand why there are rules for riding in the countryside. Minimum age 11 years old.

C+ Standard – Pink Felt

Part 1 – Riding Objectives: To understand the importance of putting equine welfare first • To show some understanding of learning theory and equine behaviour • To become an enthusiastic, educated, and practical rider • To be capable of riding a well-mannered pony or horse in a variety of Pony Club activities • To ride intelligently and with due regard for others on the roads and in the countryside, showing understanding of 'going', pace, distance, and your pony or horse's level of fitness.

Part 2 – Horse and Pony Care Objectives: To understand the importance of putting equine welfare first at all times • To understand how the Five Domains (Freedoms) affect the care of ponies and horses • To know how the behaviour of a pony or horse is affected by its environment • To understand how horses and ponies learn from previous experience • To show practical experience, or understanding and knowledge, of the care and work of a stabled horse/pony • To show practical experience and/or understanding and knowledge of the care and work of a pony or horse at grass. Minimum age: 13 years old.

B Standard – Red Felt

Part 1 – Horse and Pony Care Objectives: • To understand the role of safeguarding horses' welfare in keeping equestrians' social licence to operate • To understand your responsibility with regard to the Five Domains of horse welfare • To derive satisfaction from providing suitable care for stabled horses • To understand how horses learn and use this knowledge in the field, yard, and stable • To demonstrate practical experience and/or understanding and knowledge of the care and work of a stabled or grass-kept horse • To be capable of looking after a horse before, during, and after a strenuous day's activity or competition

Part 2 – Riding Objectives: • To appreciate the fun and satisfaction in developing a horse's training • To understand how individual horses' behaviour may require adaptations in their training • To understand how horses learn and how to use this knowledge when riding • To become an educated, effective, and practical rider who knows the reasons for what he or she is doing • To be capable of riding a well-mannered horse in a variety of Pony Club activities • To ride intelligently and with due regard for others who may be riding young, green, or untrained horses • To know and understand the basic responses for all horses to be ridden safely and successfully • To know and understand the first three points in the Scale of Training, providing a staircase of training suitable for all horses • To be able to maintain a horse's way of going • To ride over a variety of fences at all paces (approx. height, 85 cm) • To understand your responsibilities towards equestrianism's social licence to operate. Minimum age: 14 years old.

Following B Test, members can take the following tests:-

- **Lungeing Test (Pale Blue Felt)**
- **B+ Test (Purple Felt)**
- **AH Test (Orange Felt)**
- **A Test (Blue Felt)**

The Pony Club A Test is the highest test of horsemastership available in the Pony Club. Normally taken between 18 and 21 years old.

Pony Club Tests are internationally recognised in the equine community.

Although minimum ages are stipulated, recent guidance from The Pony Club notes that most members will be competent and ready to take their test at least 1-2 years older than the minimum age.

All tests are optional however, members must take tests in sequence with the exception of the E Test which is not mandatory before taking D Test.

Training is provided in the Branch in advance of Test Dates. Members will not be put forward to take Tests without having received the appropriate training. We have a duty of care to prepare members for tests, and it is unreasonable to expect a member to take a test without the relevant training having been completed.

Riding and Road Safety

In 2023, the Pony Club removed the requirement for members to have passed their Road rider Mini Achievement Badge before taking their D Test, and the requirement for members to have passed their Road Rider Achievement Badge before taking their C Test. However, in the Branch, we feel that road safety is a key issue, and we continue to offer this training, and the opportunity to take these tests.

2.12 Branch Kit

Branch sweatshirts are compulsory and should be worn by members to Branch activities that are not formal competitions. i.e when riding jackets are worn.

Official Branch colours are navy with white text, and other colours of sweatshirts must not be worn unless supplied by the Branch for a specific activity.

Official Branch colours for cross country and mounted games are red and white checks.

These official colours have been allocated to the Branch by Headquarters when it was established in 1956. Other colours must not be worn.

The [Kit Orders](#) page of our website has links for ordering various items of kit.

2.13 Area Competitions

Each year in Northern Ireland (Area 17 of the Pony Club), an “Area Competition” for each discipline is held. This is an opportunity for members to represent the Fermanagh Harriers Branch and compete against members from the other 10 Branches in NI. We usually have members competing across most of the disciplines, and we can also field teams in some of them as well. Some classes are “Qualifying Classes” where individuals and teams who win or place highly can qualify for Regional and UK Championships. However, there are also non-qualifying classes for lower levels from lead rein up and it is an honour to represent our branch in these competitions. We encourage all our members to have a go at as many as they wish and all of our training aims to prepare members for both the riding aspect and the rules and format of each event type.

Each branch organises and hosts one area competition on a rotation basis each year, so we need assistance from all our members and parents to enable us to do this successfully. In addition, parents whose child competes at an Area Competition should expect to volunteer help for at least one Area Competition – it is a condition of entry for most Area Competitions that the Branch will provide

helpers. We appreciate volunteering at an event on which their child is taking part may be difficult, therefore they should volunteer for one of the Area competition that their child is not participating in. In most instances volunteers are required to be over 18. As explained, Area Competitions take place across the province, and so volunteering is likely to involve travel to the venue.

The general timing of the Areas is as follows and the exact dates can find on the [Area Competitions Page](#) of our website:-

Area Quiz	February/March
Horse & Pony Care Competition	April
Area Games	May
Area Dressage	July
Area Show Jumping	July
Area Tetrathlon	July
Area Eventing	July

The Pony Club Championships are held annually in England in August of each year.

In order to be eligible to take part in an Area Competition, both the rider and horse/pony must have attended a minimum of 3 working rallies in the Branch since 1st July in the previous year. When Area Competition entries are submitted, these are passed back to the Branch DC to confirm eligibility, and also to confirm that the combination of rider and pony/horse is competent to compete at the level of competition that they have entered. Teams are also selected at this point.

When selecting teams to compete on behalf of the Branch at Area Competitions, a number of factors are taken into consideration, including attendance at rallies, attendance at Branch training, attendance and results at competitions, view of coaches etc. Occasionally a member may be asked to 'ride-up' or 'ride-down' in order to make up and/or strengthen a team. We respectfully request that if a member is asked to do this, they respond positively, as it is an honour to be asked to be a team member representing the Branch.

2.14 Home Championships

Another popular competition that our members enjoy each year is the Home Championships. This is a One Day Event comprising dressage, show jumping and cross country, and is aimed at members who are not quite ready for the Area Event. It is usually held each year on the Bank Holiday Monday at the end of August so is a great way to end the summer. There are classes from 45cm lead rein up to an 80cm class for the more experienced members. It is a great opportunity to get experience at Eventing, and a fun but busy day out with your friends!

2.15 Branch Competitions

Many Pony Club Branches in Area 17 (N. Ireland) hold competitions throughout the province which are open to all Pony Club members. These are a good way to gain some valuable competition experience in a friendly setting. There are competitions in most Pony Club disciplines including dressage, show jumping, eventing, tetrathlon, games and quizzes. Many of them will have a team competition as well as individual competitions.

Details are shared as we receive them and are posted on the [What's On](#) page of our Website.

2.16 Communications in the Branch

With so many activities going on, we have a variety of communications methods that are tailored to specific information:

2.16.1 Website

This is the first port of call for everything Fermanagh Pony Club related, and if there is a general query, please check the website first to try to resolve the issue before contacting Frances or Denise.

The "[What's On](#)" page on our website lists upcoming activities, and the [Calendar Page](#) is a useful tool to see at a glance dates of both Branch and other Pony Club activities. Please check back frequently for updated information.

There is a "[Rules and Info](#)" page on our website; here we have posted current rules that we are frequently asked about, eg Hat/Body protector/vaccination/whip rule.

2.16.2 Email

Regular emails are sent to let all members know about new/upcoming Branch activities. Please ensure your email address is correct on the PCUK website when you join the Branch as this is the only email we can use to contact you.

2.16.3 Members' Social Media Groups

We have a number of Social Media groups that we use in the Branch, to aid communications.

On the Whatsapp platform, the groups include:-

- Official Members WhatsApp group (**PC Parents Info & Messages**) which all parents will be added to when joining. This group is used to send official and/or urgent messages about rallies or events and replies cannot be sent. This is to ensure it does not get cluttered with chat messages.
- We also have a "**PC Parents Chat**" WhatsApp group and parents will be added to this also. It is a friendly forum to ask any questions or check plans. If you have a specific query that relates to your individual child, please message this privately to Frances or Denise, as often these queries are not appropriate for the group chat or are missed because of the volume of messages that are often in this group. Parents should also note it is not appropriate to post information about non-Pony Club related activities into this group.

- There is a separate WhatsApp group for Tetrathlon info (“**Pony Club Tet Training**”). Please ask if you wish to be added to this group.
- There are a number of other WhatsApp Groups which are for specific purposes, such as individual events etc.

We also have a [Public Facebook Page](#), which is used for communications from the Branch to the public, and a Private [Members’ Only Facebook Group](#) which is used for members and parents to communicate with each other, including advertising items for sale etc. Please ensure that you request to join both of these.

Parents are reminded that WhatsApp and other online messaging platforms are considered as “Social Media”, and that the Code of Conduct applies to messages on these platforms.

2.17 Safeguarding

The Pony Club has a statutory duty to protect children and safeguard their welfare. Participants in Pony Club activities are entitled to expect a safe and enjoyable environment. All volunteer committee members in the Branch attend Safeguarding Training and have Access NI checks completed. Further information is available on the [Pony Club Website](#). If you have any safeguarding concerns you can also contact Denise who is the Branch Safeguarding Officer.