

New Parents' Introduction to Pony Club

So, your child has just joined Pony Club. Now you are wondering what it is all about. You've heard terms like 'Rally' and 'PPG', but don't have a clue as to their meaning. That's okay; all parents, unless they are Pony Club alumni, go through the same fog, and we would like to take a little of your time to help you to understand it better.

First of all, Canadian Pony Club is a volunteer-run, national, non-profit organization, with around 3000 members from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia. It is for young people up to the age of 21 who want to learn more about horses, riding and horse care. Our motto is "Loyalty, Character, Sportsmanship", and we believe that we instill these values into our members. We are proud of our Canadian Pony Club members who learn to be responsible, confident, motivated horse people, with a high degree of knowledge and skill in equestrian arts. They have an opportunity to learn leadership and teamwork, make many new friends, and understand their responsibility as horse owners and/or riders.

What are the activities of Pony Club? We have activities on several levels: the Branch, which is your local club, the Region, which is the larger area, comprised of many branches and is either a province or part of a province, and National, which includes the whole country.

Pony Club has a comprehensive program of education and testing riding skills and horse knowledge, starting from the lowest 'E' level, through the 'D', 'D1', and 'D2' levels, the 'C', 'C1', and 'C2' levels, the 'B', HB2 and 'B2' levels, and the 'A'. The 'D' levels are analogous to Primary School, the 'Cs' to High School, and the 'Bs' to College with the 'As' as graduate school. As in the school system, the young person works his or her way up the ladder; some finish at the 'A' level, some at the 'C' level. The achievement process is an educational one, and is not competitive.

In 2003, we introduced our Badge Program. This program consists of over 50 badges, which the member may earn by demonstrating special skills or by making a presentation to the rest of the Branch members. All members at all levels can participate in this program. This is strictly a non-competitive activity and badges may be earned as a Branch, as a small group or as an individual. Ask your DC for full details.

There are 5 riding disciplines in Pony Club; each can have activities and competitions at varying skill levels at the branch, regional, national and even international level. However, not every region has activities in every discipline; that depends on the local demand. The discipline competitions are not compulsory, and include:

- Prince Philip Games (PPG) is a program of teams of riders doing relay-type or gymkhana games on horseback. PPG is for riders up to 15 years old, but there are also Masters Games for PPG graduates.

- Tetrathlon is a four phase competition including running, swimming, shooting (air pistols at targets), and riding (either over movable 'knock down' jumps or permanent cross country jumps). Top tetrathletes often progress to the Olympic sport of Modern Pentathlon.
- Show Jumping is the probably the most famous of our equestrian sports, as it is the one seen at Spruce Meadows and the Royal Winter Fair. It is horse and rider going over a course of knock down jumps with accuracy and speed.
- Dressage is the 'ballet' of the horse world, with horse exercising a series of prescribed movements with precision and grace. (No jumping involved).
- Rally is the same as Horse Trials or 3 Day Eventing, with rider and horse completing three phases: Dressage, Cross Country (over permanent jumps) and Stadium (like Show Jumping, above). As well, riders and helpers are expected to apply their stable management skills, as Rally often runs over a three day period.

Quiz is the one non-riding competitive event at Pony Club, and is a test of knowledge at the D, C, and AB levels. Quiz is held at the Regional, National and International levels.

How do you as a parent fit in with Pony Club? As you can see by the above list of activities, Pony Club needs many volunteers with a variety of skills to keep the different programs running. Being a parent of a Pony Club member involves a commitment to not only ensuring that your child attends the various lessons and activities, but to help in their organization and running as well. You don't have to be a horseperson to help. Your DC (the District Commissioner heads up your local branch or club) will be glad to channel your skills as a volunteer.

How expensive is it to belong to Pony Club? For the year 2010, the National Fees are \$70.00 per child. There will also be a Regional Fee and possibly a Branch fee as well. You might expect to pay between \$100 and \$150 per child altogether in yearly fees. You must also join your provincial Horse Council or Horse Federation. In addition, you will pay entry fees to shows and clinics, purchase text books and other Pony Club supplies and in some clubs, you will pay extra for riding lessons.

CPC runs its own Supply House, where branches or individuals may purchase books, testing supplies, rule books, crests, pins, stickers etc. An orderform is available on our web site. Orders must be prepaid and sent with the orderform.

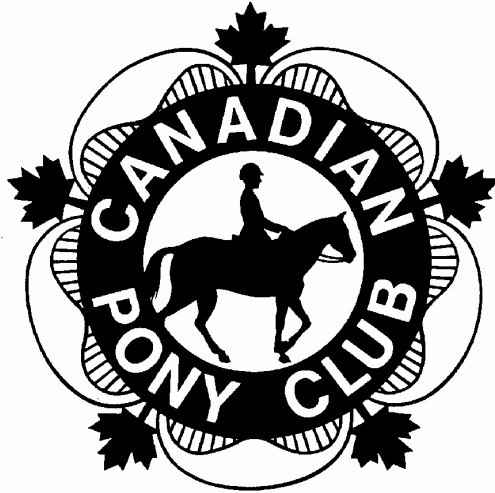
The Canadian Pony Club National Office is run out of Baldur, Manitoba. Parents are welcome to phone the office with questions or concerns. Our toll free number is 1-888-286-7669. Our fax number is 1-204-535-2289 or you may e-mail us at ponyclub@escape.ca. We also have an excellent web site, which we encourage you to visit as it contains a great amount of valuable information and from this site you may download many of the materials from the supply orderform at no charge. Our web site address is www.canadianponyclub.org.

We hope that you and your child will have a pleasant experience as members of CPC. Remember, our main goal is to teach children to love, respect and care for their horse. Competition is not for everyone and should not be forced upon any child. Our children should have fun with their friends and their horses as part of a positive learning experience. As a parent, you need to be a positive role model. To that end, we have included a copy of the Parental Code of Conduct. The members themselves produced this document. Please read it carefully and take to heart its message.

**Acronyms and Abbreviations
Or
What On Earth Are They Talking About?**

CPC	Canadian Pony Club
BCLM	British Columbia Lower Mainland
COR	Central Ontario Region
BCIN	B.C. Interior North
SLOV	St. Lawrence-Ottawa Valley
WOR	Western Ontario Region
PPG	Prince Phillip Cup Games
EC	Equine Canada
D.C.	District Commissioner
ADC	Assistant District Commissioner
V.C.	Visiting Commissioner
M.C.	Management Committee
SM	Stable Management
PSO	Provincial Sport Organizations

CANADIAN PONY CLUB



PARENTS' INFORMATION LETTER

A new parent's guide to the world of Pony Club

So your child just joined Pony Club....