

GIBBONS SCHOOL



Animal Wellness ACADEMY

Courage 🌱 *Compassion* 🌱 *Connection*



▶ ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



▶ MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCY



▶ PERSONAL GROWTH AND EMPOWERMENT

○ GIBBONS SCHOOL | ○ 2022-2023 | ○ TERM 1, 2, AND 3

Animal Wellness Academy

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH HORSES AND NATURE.

Join us for an exciting new option that highlights the mental and emotional benefits of working with animals, and in nature.

The goal of Animal Wellness Academy is to:

- Work in nature and with animals, allowing for self-directed learning and autonomy
- Allow all students including those who don't thrive in traditional classroom settings to learn and have fun
- Develop a long-lasting interest in animal health and welfare
- Develop strategies and coping mechanisms for becoming mental health champions
- Increase self-esteem and confidence
- Acquire proficiency in handling animals like horses, ponies, goats
- Build new friendships
- Develop long-term leadership skills with an emphasis on personal empowerment and resiliency
- Cultivate teamwork skills and positive role modeling within the academy and school community
- Foster the ability to care for all living things
- Provide an active option for students who don't participate in school sports



EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

During field trips to Mission Ridge Stables, children will learn how to handle emotions, stress, and day to day relationships through building connections with horses. It is a learner-established, experiential program where animals provide a pathway for children to find a connection to themselves and others around them. They will be paired with a horse based on personality and energy levels and will be responsible for caring for and working with that horse each visit. Students will learn that they cannot be good leaders until they are mentally well themselves.

Why Horses?



Horses will not be critical or annoyed by mistakes but will patiently stand by and wait for a scratch on the neck, or a piece of carrot. They readily give their hearts to their human partners, making them the perfect teachers.

- As prey animals, horses look for a leader to take them to safety. They are sensitive to nonverbal communication and mirror the people (or animals) around them.
- In a horse's world, boundaries are clear and easy to understand. Horses look for strong leadership and are willing to follow after they find respect and trust.
- An important skill for people to learn is mindful attention to the present and diversion from thoughts of self. Working with animals and in nature creates physical and psychological distance from daily routine stress of deadlines, social demands, home life, etc.
- Caring for an animal like a horse allows people to learn how to care for others appropriately
- In a horse's world, teamwork is expected and respected. Horses respect fair consequences. Horses cannot lie or overthink a situation, and their approach to every interaction is honest.
- Interpreting the feelings of a horse teaches empathy which enables understanding the feelings and situations of others. Recent studies have shown that regular exposure to a horse farm regulates the immune system, lowers stress levels and improves well-being.

Everyone deserves an opportunity to better their lives; and horses can help them do that.

Animal Wellness Academy is Curriculum-Based and Incorporates:

- Health
- Physical Education
- Career and Technology Foundations

Schedule:

- Animal & Mental Health Academy will replace complementary classes for grades 7-9.
- All classes are supervised by certified teachers.

Activities



- Trips to Mission Ridge Stables
- Horseback Riding
- Edmonton Humane Society
- Volunteering
- Outdoor pioneer classroom
- Swimming
- Wagon/Sleigh Rides
- Edmonton Valley Zoo
- Prairie Gardens
- Yoga
- Bonfires
- Nutrition

Cost: \$250 per term

Fees include:

Program Apparel
Transportation
Admission Fees
Specialized/Certified
Instructors

Activities will vary by term.