

Equestrian Heights

The National Specialised Equestrian Training Centre in Kiltarnan, Co. Dublin, offers to young people with learning difficulties, a three year training course in preparation for employment in the equestrian world. The students are introduced to a variety of different subjects to enable them to acquire the necessary skills for both independent living and job satisfaction.

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The emphasis of the Equestrian Programme in Spruce Lodge is on the development of stable management skills but all students also have the opportunity to learn to ride well and take part in vaulting. Vaulting is one of the newer equestrian sports to be introduced to Ireland and could accurately be described as gymnastics on horseback. The Equestrian Programme also includes



tack mending, a very valuable skill when working in the horse world. The other subjects running alongside and intertwined with the Equestrian Programme include pottery, horticulture, dog training, numeracy and literacy, and independent daily living skills (hygiene, cookery, budgeting, etc.).

The maximum number of student N.S.E.T.C. will accept on the three year full time programme is eighteen, and most students are referred to us through the services of the Vocational Officers of the National Rehabilitation Board. All prospective students are offered an Orientation Week at the end of which they have a very good idea of whether or not this is the course for them.

The course is a full time three year course with first and second year students working a five day week and third year students working a six day week. A very important part of the course is the Work Experience Programme which runs through the three years training. As well as giving the student time to put into practice the skills acquired here at Spruce Lodge, the Work Experience Programme offers experience in other sides of the horse industry not available here at Spruce Lodge, e.g. working with stallions, working with brood mares and foals, etc.

The N.S.E.T.C. is a registered company with limited liability and charitable status, and is governed by a Board of Directors. National S.E.T.C. receives its funding through, (a) the European Social Fund, (b) a per capita training allowance for each student through the relevant Health Board, and (c) good old-fashioned fund raising.

Visitors are always welcome at National S.E.T.C. so please do not hesitate to contact us and we can arrange a suitable time and date.

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY ABOUT SPRUCE LODGE

- 1 *This place is fantastic. One of the best Centre's in Ireland. I really enjoy all the activities.*
- 2 *What I really think is that I can see a good future in it. Excellent training. The people here are friendly all day long.*
- 3 *The staff are great. The training is excellent and enjoyable. The animals are fantastic once you get to know them. All the activities are exceptional.*
- 4 *I like the place. The weather is bad but I can't help that. I am learning a lot in the few weeks I am here. I have no complaints. Yesterday on my day off I was really bored.*
- 5 *I like it. It is very interesting. You learn a lot if you like animals. No point in doing the course if you are afraid of horses. The course is long, maybe a bit too long. The vaulting on Mondays is great fun.*