**Whip and Spur Guidance Update for 2022**

Please be aware that the whip and spur guidance has been amended for 2022.

For SJ and XC a padded whip must be used, full details of the type of whip can be found in the relevant sport Rulebook. In order to improve welfare of horses and ponies competing under The Pony Club, appropriate and excessive use of the whip has been defined, all members should be aware that excessive use of the whip will result in disqualification.

A whip, if carried, must be held by the handle with the handle at the top.

* The whip must be “padded”. The maximum length of the “Whip” is 70cm and must be no less than 45cm.
* The “Contact area”, is considered to be 2/5’s (two fifths) of the overall length of the “Whip” and must be covered with a “Pad”.
* There must be no “binding” within 17 centimetres of the end of the “Pad”.
* The “Pad” must be smooth, with no protrusion or raised surface, and be made of shock absorbing material throughout its circumference such that it gives a compression factor of at least 6mm.
* There is to be no wording, advertising or personalisation of any kind on the “Pad”.

Use of the whip: At all times, the whip must only be used

* For a good reason, as an aid to encourage the horse forward or as a reprimand.
* At an appropriate time, namely when the horse is reluctant to go forward under normal aids of seat and legs or as a reprimand immediately after a horse has been disobedient.
* In the right place, namely down the shoulder or behind the leg but never overarm.
* With appropriate severity.
* No more than twice for any one incident.
* Excessive use of the whip anywhere on the showground will result in disqualification: Use of the whip to vent a competitor’s anger is always excessive.
* Use of a whip which causes injury eg. Broken skin or a weal, is always excessive.
* Use after elimination or retirement is always excessive.
* Use on a horse’s head, neck etc. is always excessive.
* Using the whip from the ground after a rider fall or dismount is always excessive.
* If the rider’s arm comes above the shoulder when using the whip, this is always excessive.

Spurs must only be used to enhance the normal leg aids and never to vent a competitor’s anger. Use of spurs which cause injury e.g. blood or broken skin is always classed as misuse, any misuse of spurs anywhere on a showground will result in disqualification. Further information can be found in the Rulebooks.