



Code of Conduct for Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

The University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development program (Minnesota 4-H) builds engaged young people who are able to learn and lead in a global society, educates adults to work effectively with youth, and partners with communities to create supportive social environments that help youth thrive. A standard of behavior for all individuals involved in our program is one of the key components for creating a welcoming learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe.

Any individual participating and/or volunteering with the Minnesota 4-H program at any level (individual, club, county, regional, state, national and international) is subject to the behavior standards and rules governing participation and involvement as outlined in the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct. In addition to the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct there may be additional policies, rules, and procedures relating to specific 4-H events and activities that will also apply to those events/activities.

The Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct (adopted August 2013) applies and will be enforced with 4-H members, 4-H parents and 4-H volunteers as follows:

- While participating in or attending a 4-H sponsored program (e.g. club meeting, project meeting, activity, event, learning opportunity).
- At the county fair while participating in or attending a 4-H event or while on premises used for 4-H purposes (e.g. show ring, exhibit building, barn, food stand).
- At the state fair, during their (or their child's) assigned encampment or assigned volunteer responsibility.

In addition, the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct applies and will be enforced as follows:

- At all times during the year of service for 4-H members who agree to represent Minnesota 4-H to the public by accepting a statewide 4-H leadership role (e.g. state 4-H ambassador, state 4-H PDC member).
- At all times throughout a volunteer's service when behavior outside of the Minnesota 4-H puts youth at risk or has the potential to put youth at risk.

The opportunity to participate in and/or volunteer with Minnesota 4-H is a privilege and honor, not a right. All youth participants, parents/guardians supporting their child's participation in 4-H, and volunteers are expected to sign the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct before becoming involved with Minnesota 4-H. Continued participation in Minnesota 4-H is based on individuals meeting the requirements of the program including the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct.



Infractions to the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct will be addressed and may result in consequences. Because Minnesota 4-H is a safe place for youth and adults to learn from their mistakes, minor disruptive or inappropriate behavior will first be addressed through redirection and coaching. When the nature of the offense is more severe or there is a pattern of minor disruptive or inappropriate behavior, violations of the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct will result in consequences. The consequences may range from a verbal warning to the loss of privileges (e.g. participation at the event or future events, forfeiture of awards or other forms of recognition, forfeiture of positions of leadership, limitation on volunteer responsibilities) to full removal from Minnesota 4-H. Consequences may be applied to entire 4-H entities, when applicable.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. I understand that the Minnesota 4-H Youth Development program is a non-formal education program in which I have an option to volunteer. I will complete the expectations of my volunteer assignment, working with staff and volunteers to create quality learning environments for youth. I accept my responsibility to engage in program activities and to excuse myself from this volunteer assignment if it does not meet my volunteer objectives. I recognize the organization has the responsibility and authority to remove individuals who are serving as volunteers that are disruptive to the 4-H Youth Development program or for any other reason the 4-H Youth Development program deems appropriate.
2. I accept my responsibility to represent the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development program by holding myself to the standards of the 4-H pledge and motto. I will refrain from behavior that negatively represents myself, my family, my community, 4-H or the University of Minnesota.
3. I acknowledge that the 4-H program utilizes competition related to project work as a tool for learning. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship, encourage this behavior in program participants and other volunteers, and not allow this behavior to detract from the learning experience. I will not let my personal desire to win overshadow the needs of the group or violate positive youth development principles.
4. I accept my personal responsibility to be informed and follow the policies, rules and deadlines established by Minnesota 4-H. I will not cheat, lie, knowingly furnish false information, deceive, or otherwise engage in dishonest, unethical or illegal behaviors. I will not encourage others to disregard or intentionally violate conditions of Minnesota 4-H participation.
5. I will act in a respectful and responsible manner during all 4-H programs. I will comply with directions of 4-H officials acting in the performance of their duties. I will not obstruct or disrupt any 4-H program or encourage others to engage in such conduct. I understand that a judge's decision is final.
6. I will promote a spirit of inclusion and welcome participation of individuals from all backgrounds. I will encourage youth involvement in decision making. I will practice fair-mindedness by being open to ideas and opinions of others. I will comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws. I will not participate in behaviors that discriminate against other people.

7. I will communicate (oral, written and electronic) in an open, honest, respectful manner in all situations involving the 4-H program. I will refrain from communication that is negative, offensive, destructive or hurtful to others. I will refrain from sharing private matters in a public group setting. I will not engage in or tolerate slander, put-downs, insults, taunting, name-calling, yelling, profane language, sexual innuendos and other comments or hostile behaviors likely to offend, hurt or set a bad example. If I witness this type of behavior, I will contact the staff member. If the situation is escalating to where I feel unsafe, I will contact the authorities.
8. I will ensure a safe environment for myself and others involved in 4-H programs that I am leading. I will not act in an irresponsible or potentially hazardous manner. I will access and operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in compliance with laws, rules of the 4-H program, and general safety practices.
9. I will model healthy choices. I will not offer alcohol, tobacco products or illegal substances to youth. I will not possess or use illegal substances. I will not use alcohol or tobacco products during a 4-H program. I will not attend 4-H programs under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance.
10. I will be courteous and respectful of other individuals and their property. I will dress in a manner that is appropriate, tasteful and respectful for youth. I will not use, abuse or take another individual's personal belongings. I will not damage facilities.
11. I will not have sexual contact or a sexual relationship with a member. I will not use physical punishment for discipline. If I have reason to believe that a member is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, I will make an immediate report of the neglect or abuse to a law enforcement or social service agency. I will abide by the University of Minnesota policy on the safety of minors.
12. I will use appropriate channels within the University of Minnesota Extension to address concerns and conflicts, working towards resolution. I will accept the decision of the individual and/or group that has the leadership and authority to make the decision, even if the decision is not the one I personally desire.
13. I will demonstrate behaviors appropriate as a positive role model. If I have a guest or guests in attendance at a 4-H program, I will encourage them to abide by the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct and ask them to leave if they are unable to abide by the code. I recognize that if the guest's behavior interferes with the learning, my guests may be asked to leave the 4-H program.
14. I will expect youth and adults participating in the programs I lead as a 4-H volunteer to follow the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct. If behaviors contrary to the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct are demonstrated during a 4-H program, I will address the situation appropriately and consult with my staff supervisor when needed.

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE MINNESOTA 4-H CODE OF CONDUCT

I have read, accept, and will abide by the full University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development (Minnesota 4-H) Code of Conduct for Volunteers including the introduction and the



statements describing expected behavior. I understand that the expectations apply throughout Minnesota 4-H. I also understand that infractions of the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct WILL result in consequences and that these consequences apply throughout Minnesota 4-H. I will accept the consequences determined by University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development.

VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

COUNTY _____

The Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct was developed and approved for use August 8, 2013. This code is also available online at www.4-H.umn.edu/policy or as a printed copy from the County Extension Office.