



Code of Conduct for Youth

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 the behavior outside of 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 YOUTH

1. I understand that the Minnesota 4-H Youth Development program is a non-formal education program in which I have an option to participate. I accept my responsibility to engage in program activities and to excuse myself from this program if it does not meet my personal learning objectives. I recognize the organization has the responsibility and authority to remove youth who 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 ensure that my project exhibits are appropriate and respectful. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship, encourage this behavior in others, 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.
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 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 is type of behavior, I will contact a volunteer or 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. 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 make healthy choices. I will not possess, offer, or use tobacco, alcohol or illegal substances. I will not attend 4-H programs under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance. I will not engage in sexual conduct with adults or inappropriate sexual conduct with other youth.
10. I will dress in a manner that is appropriate, tasteful and respectful to me and others. I will avoid clothing and accessories that depict violence, sex, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, death, gangs or other offensive or obscene pictures or language. I will not wear clothing that reveals my underclothing, midsection, torso, chest, cleavage or upper thighs. If a dress code is provided for a specific 4-H program, I will follow the stated dress code.
11. I will respect the property of others. I will not use, abuse, or take another individual's personal belongings. I will not damage facilities.
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 with 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. I recognize that if the guest's behavior interferes with the learning, my guest may be asked to leave the 4-H program.

YOUTH 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 Youth 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.

YOUTH SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

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.