

Texas 4-H Volunteer Code of Conduct

The following guidelines assist volunteers in understanding personal conduct expectations during the course and scope of their duties. 4-H Volunteers must abide by all applicable Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service procedures.

A 4-H Volunteer is expected to:

- Respect the individual rights, safety, and property of others.
- Carry-out the assigned position responsibilities that he or she has accepted. Volunteers should be provided with a written position description to which they agree. One copy should be kept on file in the county Extension office and one given to the volunteer.
- Participate in routine volunteer training opportunities and activities pertinent to their duties.
- Be committed to the core values, education goals, and standards of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Support the 4-H Youth Development Program and its rules and guidelines.
- Recognize and support the responsibilities of the 4-H Youth Development Program staff in setting program standards, priorities, and direction.
- Support the non-discrimination practices of the 4-H Youth Development Program, including: race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Make reasonable efforts to provide access to 4-H related information and equal opportunities to youth in their community to participate in project activities, awards programs and other events and activities.
- Adhere to Texas laws on the use of motor vehicles.
- Not consume alcohol and/or illegal drugs (or to be under the influence thereof) while involved or en route to or from any 4-H event, meeting or activity.
- Serve as good examples for youth in both public and private life. This includes appropriate dress, language and moral conduct in accordance with the generally recognized standards of our society.
- Maintain direct supervision of 4-H members and not leave their delegation unsupervised unless approval was received from the individual in charge of the overall event or delegation.
- Not sign a lease agreement, use permit with schools or other public or private facilities, or grant or order contracts on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. All such agreements shall be forwarded to the local office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for review and forwarding to appropriate official for signature.
- Recognize Texas Law requiring all adults to report suspected child abuse to proper law enforcement or county child protective services.
- Safeguard and hold confidential any information gained through administrative duties involving supervision of personnel or other information identified by the program as being confidential.

- Not physically or verbally abuse a youth member or use corporal punishment to reprimand 4-H members for inappropriate behavior.
- Understand that falsifying enrollment information, budgets, documents or records is a breach of the Code of Ethics.
- Not engage in sexual activity with youth members.
- Adhere to fiscal responsibility and financial best management practices as outlined by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- Register as a volunteer in only one county
- Not receive compensation for professional services provided in support of youth 4-H activities (excluding reimbursement for expenses).

Consequences for Infractions

Volunteers' infractions of the Texas 4-H Volunteer Code of Conduct must be reported to the 4-H Youth Development staff and/or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office. Consequences may include:

- Discussion of the inappropriate actions with the 4-H leader, clarification of the policy.
- Reassignment or suspension of volunteer.
- Termination as a 4-H volunteer.
- Notification of incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

A volunteer may be reassigned or dismissed at the sole discretion of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service with or without cause. Examples of conduct which could lead to disciplinary action include, but are not limited to: illegal activity, behavior which compromises the health and safety of youth, violating an Extension policy, violation of 4-H Rules and Guidelines, willfully violating or causing children to violate rules, being habitually disruptive to the overall program, unwilling or unable to work amicably with agents and/or other volunteers, exhibit conduct which is harmful to the 4-H program's reputation, or failure to rotate the leadership role. The nature and seriousness of the infraction or violation will determine whether the option of reassignment or dismissal should be considered. An adult volunteer who is unable to grasp the overall philosophy of youth development may be asked to leave and/or counseled toward other avenues of volunteering. A child who has a parent dismissed as a 4-H volunteer is still eligible to participate in 4-H.

Immediate Removal of an Adult from an Event

Any adult may be required to immediately leave any 4-H function for using abusive language, threatening any individual, becoming violent, causing or threatening bodily harm to any minor (including their own child) or adult, or exhibiting signs of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.