



# Code of Conduct for Parents

## 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 applies to both face-to-face and online environments 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 may apply in non-4-H settings under the following circumstances:

- 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).
- During a volunteer's service if the behavior 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. Behavior that involves sexual misconduct, discrimination, or related retaliation may be reported to the University of Minnesota Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office. Consequences may be applied to entire 4-H entities, when applicable.

## Code of conduct for parents

1. I understand that the Minnesota 4-H Youth Development program is a non-formal education program in which I have an option for my child(ren) to participate. I accept my responsibility to ensure my child(ren) have the opportunity to engage in program activities and to remove them from this program if it does not meet the personal learning objectives of my child(ren). I recognize the organization has the responsibility and authority to remove children and/or parents 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 the project exhibits created by my children are appropriate and respectful. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship, encourage this behavior in my child(ren), and not allow this to detract from the learning experience. I will not let my personal desire to win overshadow the needs of my child(ren) 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 practice fair-mindedness by being open to ideas and opinions of others. I will comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws and University of Minnesota policies. I will not participate in behaviors that discriminate against other people.
7. I will be courteous and respectful. 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.
8. I will ensure a safe environment for myself and others. I will abide by Minnesota 4-H risk management practices and expect my child to do the same. I will disclose to staff the health (social, emotional, physical, intellectual) or legal issues

that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others. I understand that this information will be kept confidential and used only for ensuring a safe experience for the youth.

9. I understand that it is my responsibility to request reasonable accommodations for my child if my child needs them because my child has a diagnosed disability. I will request accommodations as early as possible and work with the 4-H program to help them determine what accommodations are reasonable. I understand that any accommodation decision rests solely with Minnesota 4-H.
10. I will model healthy choices. I will not use alcohol, marijuana, or an illegal substance during a 4-H program. I will not attend a 4-H program under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or any illegal substance.
11. I will abide by the University of Minnesota policy on possession and carrying of weapons (firearms or other dangerous weapons as defined by Minnesota law). I will not possess or carry a weapon while on University property or during attendance at a 4-H program, regardless of location, except in the following two circumstances: (1) I am lawfully storing a firearm inside a personal motor vehicle; or (2) I have been authorized by the 4-H program to possess and carry firearms at 4-H Shooting Sports/Wildlife programs.
12. I will contact a volunteer or staff member if I witness behaviors that do not align with this code of conduct. If a situation is escalating to where I feel unsafe, I will contact the authorities. I will not retaliate against an individual because of the individual's good faith participation in reporting misconduct or participating in investigations.
13. 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.
14. I will demonstrate behaviors appropriate as a positive role model. I will review the Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct for Youth with my child(ren) and expect them to abide by it, addressing issues with them in a timely manner. 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.

## Parent/guardian 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 Parents 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.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The Minnesota 4-H Code of Conduct was developed and approved for use August 8, 2013. Updates were made to the Code of Conduct September 13, 2023. This code is available online at [www.4-H.umn.edu/policy](http://www.4-H.umn.edu/policy) or as a printed copy from the County Extension Office.*

