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Delaware 4-H Club Policies

Updated April 2026

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If you need a reasonable accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact the Delaware 4-H Program at de4h@udel.edu, or 302-831-2509. All reasonable accommodation requests should be made at least two weeks prior to the event.

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Active Club Status Policy

4-H clubs are the foundation of every successful 4-H program. As the primary delivery method of 4-H, clubs provide volunteers and members with unlimited opportunities for learning, building relationships and fun. The unique opportunity for social and personal development provided through the club/group structure is the most effective and efficient way to achieve the mission of 4-H.

The purpose of an active 4-H club is to provide positive youth development opportunities to meet the needs of young people to experience belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity—the 4-H Essential Elements—and to foster educational opportunities tied to the Land Grant University knowledge base. Each club is required to enroll at least 5 youth members from at least 3 families and conduct a minimum of 6 regular club meetings per year, with many holding more meetings throughout most or all of the year, and often supplemented by project meetings, camps, fairs, and other 4-H learning activities.

9/18/2021

E. B. L.

Delaware 4-H Club Bylaws

One of the requirements for a Delaware 4-H Club or Group to receive a 4-H Charter is the club have a set of guidelines, which establish the parameters for the club. These guidelines are in the form of bylaws.

The club or group members take responsibility, with guidance from an UDCE 4-H volunteer, for establishing the bylaws. The written guidelines for a club or group should not exceed two pages. It is important that bylaws be written in such a way that they do not eliminate any youth from participation or discriminate against any youth. The guidelines established should be simple, easy to understand and approved by the city or county 4-H Youth Development Educator.

A sample outline for club/group bylaws is provided for use by clubs or groups in your city/county program is provided on the following pages.

Delaware 4-H Club Bylaws Sample

Bylaws of _____ 4-H Club Name

The name of this organization shall be .

Purpose: The purpose of this 4-H club is to support the development of its members through club meetings, project work, demonstrations, fairs and other activities.

Policies:

- The club will meet regularly once a month to conduct business.
- Any major decision of the club must be voted upon by the majority of the members present.

Membership:

- Without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin, any youth, age 8-19 as of January 1, of the current year may become a member of this club.
- To become a member, a person must attend three meetings and know the 4-H pledge.
- A member shall be dropped from club enrollment if he or she misses three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation.
- The leader, with the executive committee, shall review the reasons for absence to determine whether a member's name is removed from the roll.

Officers, Elections and Duties:

- The elected officers of this club shall be president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and reporter.
- Officers shall be elected annually by August and shall begin term of office in September.
- An officer shall have been a member in good standing of the club for three months prior to election.
- Officers shall not succeed themselves.
- There shall be a nominating committee of three members: the president and two appointed members at least one month prior to election. The nominating committee shall submit at least one nominee for each office at the meeting in August.
- Nominations from the floor shall follow the report of the nominating committee.

- Only those members who are eligible and willing shall be accepted as nominees.
- The appointed officers may be historian, recreation leader and song leader.
- These officers shall be appointed in September by the executive committee.
- An appointed officer shall have been a member in good standing for three months prior to appointment.
- Officers shall perform duties set forth in the 4-H Officer Handbook.
- The vice president shall succeed to the presidency if such vacancy occurs.
- Other vacancies shall be filled by a vote of the members at the next regular meeting or appointed by the executive committee.

Meetings to begin promptly at p.m. on the of each month.

Executive Committee:

- The executive committee shall consist of the officers and standing chairs (and leaders).
- The duties of the executive committee shall be to transact any absolutely necessary business between regular meetings and any other business referred to it by the club members.
- The executive committee shall meet between the regular meetings as necessary.

Standing and Special Committees:

- Standing committees shall be appointed by the president as necessary and shall serve to the end of the club year.
- Special committees shall be appointed by the president and shall serve only as long as needed.
- The vice president shall be a member of all committees except the nominating committee.

Article IX: Amendments: The bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the membership provided they do not conflict with the required articles.

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Delaware 4-H Club Maintenance

For Extension Educators, 4-H Youth Development

The following are desired outcomes for 4-H clubs and suggested strategies for achieving the outcomes.

Desired Outcomes:

- Clubs meet 4-H Club Charter Standards
- UDCE volunteers provide leadership
- Youth are recognized as resources
- Members of the club are fully involved
- Club leaders receive training
- All members are re-enrolled by January 1
- New members are continually added
- Membership and leadership show diversity
- Club participates in events and programs beyond the club level

Strategies for Achieving Outcomes:

- At least one planned visit to each club annually by Extension Educator or by designated UDCE volunteer. Use the suggested Club Visit Checklist to determine strengths and weaknesses of the club
- Conduct follow-up club visits as and when necessary
- Maintain close contact with club organizational leaders
- Review annual club plans and make suggestions as necessary
- Establish county goals for clubs including the following:
    1. Club membership
    2. Re-enrollment
    3. Plans for accomplishing goals
    4. Set time lines for accomplishing goals
- Establish a county training program for organizational and project leaders in the following areas:
    1. Recruiting members and volunteers
    2. Involving parents
    3. Planning meetings
    4. Youth leadership and partnerships
    5. Member involvement
    6. Club management
    7. Youth development
    8. Program planning

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Delaware 4-H Club Financial Guidelines For Chartered 4-H Clubs and Other Groups Authorized to Use the 4-H Name and Emblem in Delaware

The Delaware 4-H Youth Development program is part of the Delaware Cooperative Extension, which is part of the University of Delaware. Because of this relationship, all financial transactions of local 4-H clubs, county councils, committees, boards, and other related organizations (county leaders' council/association, camp board, livestock sale committee, etc.) must be managed according to the guidelines outlined in this paper.

Under U.S. Department of Agriculture and University of Delaware guidelines, each County Cooperative Extension Office is required to keep track of all financial transactions made by clubs and groups authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem. Each authorized club/group must complete an annual report showing the source of all income and how it is disbursed. The required annual report:

- Creates an open, public record for each nonprofit group.
- Fulfills the audit concerns of the University of Delaware.
- Shows how Delaware Extension-related organizations help the University fulfill its obligation of accountability to the residents of Delaware.

The following guidelines will help your 4-H club/group fulfill its responsibilities for handling funds:

1. Bank Account: All monies should be placed in a bank account in the name of the club/group. As nonprofit organizations, 4-H clubs/groups are normally not charged a service fee. There may be, however, a charge for printing the club/group name on checks. It is highly recommended that bank statements be sent from the bank directly to the leader to allow for necessary oversight.

2. Employer Identification Number (EIN): All 4-H clubs fall under the umbrella of the Delaware 4-H Association for Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reporting. Therefore, when a club opens a new account at a banking institution, the 4-H club must notify the State 4-H Office in order to allow the proper paperwork to be completed and provided to the 4-H club to use in properly

establishing this financial account. The State 4-H Office will need to know the club name as well as the financial institution name where the new account will be opened. 4-H clubs who had bank accounts established before the Delaware 4-H Association was created on April 9, 2012 are also encouraged to follow this same procedure to change their current EIN number on file over to the EIN number for the Delaware 4-H Association.

3. Signatures: Each club/group is required to have two (2) names on all checking and savings accounts. Chartered 4-H clubs will have the youth treasurer and a Delaware Cooperative Extension (DCE) volunteer on accounts. The DCE volunteer should not be the parent, or relative of the treasurer. If the parent of the Treasurer is the Organizational Leader, an additional adult leader's name must be added to the account during the time period this situation exists. The club can require both signatures on all checks or may elect to only require one signature. No University of Delaware faculty or staff member's signature may appear on any account belonging to a 4-H club/group authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem.

4. Delaware 4-H Club Treasurer's Record Book: The club/group treasurer should use the Delaware 4-H Club Treasurer's Guidebook as a guide/reference to show sources and amounts of money received and payments made to whom and for what purpose. Treasurer's records become a permanent part of the club records.

5. Annual Budget: Clubs/groups are encouraged to prepare an annual budget. This is a written plan to raising and spending money for 1 year. Since the members of the club/group approve the budget, it will not be necessary to seek approval for payment of items included in the budget. If the club/group does not have a budget, or items arise that are not a part of the budget, each item must be presented to members for approval before payment is made. An annual budget accomplishes two things. First, all expenditures of club funds are made with full approval of the club/group. Second, it is a great way for members to learn how money flows in and out of an organization.

6. Receipts: All income should be acknowledged with a written receipt, preferably pre-numbered. The receipt should include the source of the funds (such as carwash or plant sale), the date, and if possible, the name of the person making the payment. These receipts are the back-up documentation for bank deposits. The receipts become a permanent part of the club/group records.

7. Payments: Payments should be made only in response to a written bill or sales receipt. The itemized receipts clearly stating what was billed, with the check number and the date of the check on it, will also become a permanent part of the treasurer's records.

8. Fund Raising: 4-H members do not pay state or national membership dues. Local and county clubs/groups may raise money for their goals through fund-raising or dues or both. Fund-raising must be done for the good of the total group and be consistent with the county/state fund-raising policies.

   All monies raised using the 4-H name must be used only for 4-H activities. Because these funds are publicly accountable, they may not be given to individual club members or others, but must be used to pay for educational programs, activities, workshops, or supplies. Fund-raising should not be the main focus of group activities nor exclude any individual from participating. Clubs are expected to support the financial needs of the total group and, when possible, assist with participant costs in county, state, national, and international programs. Recommended fund-raisers for youth groups include car washes; bake, cookie, citrus fruit, plant, candy, and yard sales; pancake suppers; spaghetti dinners; auctions; and flea markets.

9. Cash Donations: Cash donations must be acknowledged in writing to the donor and must include the amount of the contribution. A copy of the acknowledgment must be kept with the treasurer's records.

10. Non-Cash Donations: Non-cash donations (consumable donations of supplies or miscellaneous items) should also be acknowledged in writing to the donor. A description of the item(s) must be included in the acknowledgment. Valuation of non-cash donations is the responsibility of the donor, in consultation with his/her tax advisor and individuals qualified to appraise an item of this type. It is not appropriate for a 4-H club/group, faculty/staff member, or Delaware Cooperative Extension volunteer to place a value on items donated. Donors cannot specify the individual recipient of cash or non-cash donations. A copy of the acknowledgment must be kept with the treasurer's records.

11. Non-consumable donations such as equipment or animals should be accepted only if the club/group is prepared to accept the responsibilities of ownership including care, maintenance, and insurance. Clubs should not feel compelled to accept non-cash gifts. Contact the 4-H faculty/staff member whenever there are questions about accepting and/or managing donations.

12. Quid Pro Quo Contributions: Quid pro quo contributions, "payment made partly as a contribution and partly for goods or services provided to the donor by the charity," should also be acknowledged in writing. An example of a quid pro quo contribution is where the donor gives $100 for a cake valued at $12. The disclosure statement must inform the donor that the "amount of the contribution that is deductible for federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of any money (and the value of any property other than money) contributed by the donor over the value of goods or services provided by the charity," and provide the donor with a good faith estimate of the value of goods or services that the donor received.

13. Bank Statements: All bank statements received from the bank must be reconciled by the Treasurer on a timely basis. All bank statements and bank reconciliations become part of the club's permanent records.

14. County Review: A financial report for each 4-H club/group authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem must be turned in to the county Extension office by March 15th each year for review. The financial report will represent information for the 4-H year of January 1st through December 31st. The county 4-H Youth Development educator, the County Extension Director or other identified individual(s) not affiliated with the club will conduct the financial review. The form required for the review is the Annual Club Audit Form. These reports become a permanent part of the county record maintained for each club/group and will remain on file for five (5) years.

    Additional information, including all bank statements, receipts, canceled checks, checkbooks, savings account books, and the Delaware 4-H Club Treasurer's Guidebook may also be requested for review. These items will be returned following the review and should remain with the permanent club/group records.

15. Club/Group Disbandment: Monies left in account(s) when a club/group disbands, ceases operation, or loses its charter must be turned over to the Delaware Cooperative Extension Office. These monies may be used for county 4-H programs and activities. All property belonging to the club/group must be turned in to the Delaware Cooperative Extension Office. If a club divides, creating more than one properly chartered club or authorized group, the funds from the original club/group must be divided based on membership in each club/group.

16. Complaints: The Delaware Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development faculty/staff member and/or County Extension Director will investigate all complaints regarding use of funds. Concerns can be avoided and/or settled quickly if all financial records are kept up-to-date and the guidelines outlined here have been followed.

17. Annual Club Audit forms will be distributed in January. Clubs/Groups Not Handling Money: Clubs/Groups that don't have treasuries and don't handle any money need to mark 0's on the Annual Club Audit Form, sign and date the form, and return it to the county Extension Office by March 15th each year.

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Delaware 4-H Club Visit Checklist

This check sheet can be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of 4-H clubs or groups. Place a check where changes or improvements are needed.

1. **Facilities:**
   - ☐ Clean
   - ☐ Safe
   - ☐ Handicapped accessible
   - ☐ Seating (all can see and hear)
   - ☐ Smoke free
   - ☐ Heat, air and light adequate
   - ☐ Type (private home, public building)

Comments:

2. **Educational Program:**
   - ☐ Planned yearly program
   - ☐ Planned program for the meeting
   - ☐ Program is interesting
   - ☐ Everyone learned something at the meeting
   - ☐ Project training being conducted

Comments:

3. **Youth Leadership**
   - ☐ Agenda planned with leaders and youth
   - ☐ Officers are trained
   - ☐ Duties of offices carried out properly
   - ☐ Correct parliamentary procedures are used during business meeting
   - ☐ Youth leaders involved effectively

Comments:

Membership:
   - ☐ Every member participates
   - ☐ Members are recognized
   - ☐ Committee assignments shared by members
   - ☐ Members leave promptly after meeting with a qualified person
   - ☐ Announcements of upcoming events made and explained
   - ☐ Opportunity for fun and recreation

Comments:

Adult Leadership:
   - ☐ Organizational leaders
   - ☐ Project leaders for each project area
   - ☐ Leaders present for the entire meeting
   - ☐ Leaders assume an advisory role
   - ☐ Meeting begins and ends on time
   - ☐ Business meeting no more than 30 minutes in length
   - ☐ Absent members contacted
   - ☐ Announcements of upcoming events made and explained

Comments:

Revised 10/04

Special Membership Category for 4-H: Kindergarten through Third Graders – 4-H Cloverbuds

It is neither the intent nor the objective of the 4-H Cloverbuds program to duplicate the 4-H member experiences that are designed for older youth, nor to create a "mini-4-H" concept.

While the 4-H Cloverbuds program is a part of the overall 4-H Youth Development program and 4-H Cloverbuds members are recognized as 4-H members for the purposes of enrollment, they are considered to be in a special membership category with regard to program and policy.

Chartering 4-H Cloverbuds, 4-H CloverKids or Similar Primary Grade Programs
No matter what a state or county 4-H program chooses to use as the name for members in this age group, the 4-H program must still follow the national policies established for this special membership category and these groups must still be chartered to recognize their program and enable them to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. While different names are recognized for this membership category, "4-H Cloverbuds" will be used within this document for consistency and ease.

Purpose of Kindergarten through Third Grade Programs
The overall purpose of the 4-H Cloverbuds program is to foster the development of life skills that are essential for the cognitive, social, emotional and physical maturation of Kindergarten through 3rd graders. Children in these grades are a distinct audience for 4-H, with unique learning characteristics and developmental needs that are different from older children and youth. As a result, the 4-H Cloverbuds program is designed with specific educational objectives and program policies focused on the 5-8 year old [Note: We recognize that 8 year olds are in transition between the 4-H Cloverbuds program and 4-H, these policies are pertinent to those children served by these special membership programs as defined within a state program].

Participation, safety, personal development, learning and fun are the highest priorities in providing 4-H Cloverbuds programs. The policies outlined in this document seek to ensure that 4-H Cloverbuds members remain safe and have positive, developmentally appropriate experiences in 4-H. State and county programs that offer the 4-H Cloverbuds program are expected to utilize age appropriate programmatic goals, policies, curriculum, and cooperation-based methods to give feedback and recognition. In all programs, the determining factors in designing the learning experiences are the 4-H Cloverbuds members' interests, abilities, and needs. The focus of the 4-H Cloverbuds is the positive growth of the children, not the activities used as vehicles to foster that growth and development.

POLICIES & GUIDELINES

The 4-H Youth Development program is committed to experiential education, supporting the development of life skills, and meeting developmental needs in positive, productive ways. 4-H accomplishes this through three major mission areas: Science, Engineering & Technology, Healthy Lifestyles, and Citizenship. Based on the needs, interest, and developmental tasks of children in grades K-3, in addition to the 4-H Essential Elements, the following guidelines and polices were established with the initial recognition of the 4-H Cloverbuds program, and subsequently supported by the National 5-8 Curriculum Task Force in 1992. It is understood that policies that affect different age groups and settings will vary and state and county programs may add additional policies and guidelines to direct their programs, however, these policies define the minimum standards for 4-H programming with the K-3 audience.

4-H Cloverbuds programs follow a set of program guidelines based on developmental appropriateness. A "developmentally appropriate" program is one that is based on the general characteristics of an age group and adapts to meet the individual needs of each child. That often involves using different kinds of equipment or providing more adult supervision. Sometimes a 4-H Cloverbuds member will be physically capable of doing something but will not be able to understand the reason for the process or the result.
Participation in that activity would be just as inappropriate as participation in an activity that is unsafe because of physical limitations.

As a result, the 4-H Cloverbuds program is fundamentally different than general membership in 4-H. Requirements of the 4-H Cloverbuds program include:

1. **Activity-Focused rather than Project-Focused**

The educational component of a 4-H Cloverbuds program consists of activities rather than projects. A 4-H Cloverbuds activity focuses on developing a single concept and/or skill rather than focusing on a project over time. It is not appropriate for K-3 graders to participate in an ongoing, planned series of activities as a member, whether it is a 4-H Shooting Sports program, or an animal project. 4-H Cloverbuds members participate in occasional, non-competitive, sampler-type, age-appropriate, properly supervised events or activities sponsored or conducted by 4-H groups.

2. **Cooperative vs. Competitive Activities**

4-H Cloverbuds programs do not conduct or participate in competitive activities. Competitive activities require motor skills, reflexes, and strength that often are not yet fully developed in young children. In addition, research indicates that participation in competitive activities is developmentally inappropriate for 4-H Cloverbuds members. Grades K-3 children are sensitive to criticism; often have not developed frustration tolerance or the full ability to manage their emotions, which often results in not being able to accept failure well. 4-H Cloverbuds activities should be conducted in a positive environment that focuses on the members' strengths rather than analyzing their deficiencies. 4-H Cloverbuds members need opportunities to practice skills, discover. Special Membership Category for 4-H: Kindergarten through Third Graders talents and learn about fairness in a non-judgmental environment.

3. 4-H Cloverbuds Members and Exhibition at Fairs

4-H Cloverbuds members are encouraged to exhibit activity-related items from their club at appropriate venues. 4-H Exhibitions should be open to participation by 4-H Cloverbuds as noncompetitive exhibitors. 4-H Cloverbuds members are not eligible to receive premium funds as a result of exhibition.

4-H Cloverbuds members should not have animal projects (as described under item #1) nor should they participate as competitive exhibitors with animals. To exhibit animals in a noncompetitive event as a 4-H Cloverbuds member, youth must be in at least 3rd grade during the current 4-H year and there must be increased adult supervision with a one-to-one ratio with the child. This policy is for the safety of the 4-H Cloverbuds member and the public at the public exhibition. The developmental ability and the maturity level of the exhibitor and the unpredictable behavior of animals determine this policy.

4. Adult Supervision of 4-H Cloverbuds Programs

4-H Cloverbuds clubs do not conduct formal business meetings or elect officers. Children in grades K-3 are not yet ready to fulfill the responsibilities of club officership and require much more adult guidance when making group decisions. However, a structured routine is important to this age group.

4-H Cloverbuds clubs handle their finances differently than clubs of older children. For safety reasons, 4-H Cloverbuds should not bring money for dues or supplies to club meetings, nor should they conduct door-to-door fundraising activities. They may, however, participate in group fundraising events supervised by adults. Parents and leaders will decide on how club

expenses will be handled when the club is organized.

A minimum of two adult leaders is required to start a 4-H club of any age group and at least two adults (leaders, parents or others) must be present at every 4-H meeting and activity. For groups of 5-6 year olds, the group should not exceed twelve children. For groups of 7-8 years olds, a third adult is required if the group exceeds twelve children and the group size should not exceed sixteen children.

An adult or older teen leader will be with the 4-H Cloverbuds member at all times when in the presence of an animal or when using equipment that is potentially dangerous. This includes: scissors, saws, knives, needles, rockets, kitchen appliances, and so forth. 4-H Cloverbuds members should not operate power driven equipment as a part of activities (sewing machines, power drills, small engines, blenders, mixers, clippers, mowers, etc.). 4-H Cloverbuds members should wear appropriate safety helmets or other safety equipment such as life vests when engaged in activities such as riding horses, bicycles, skateboards, canoeing, or other activities.

Management of K-3 Programs

Those leading a K-3 special membership category programs should be sensitive to risk management issues, and should consult with insurance providers. Many providers insure "4-H participants" which is defined as 4th graders and up and may not cover K-3 participants in activities or events not specified without an additional rider.

Resources

It is important that children in grades K-3 be involved in activities where the risk of failure is minimized and the opportunity to experience success is maximized. The most reliable way to find activities that are based on the general characteristics of the age group is to select from the many 4-H Cloverbuds resources that are available throughout the 4-H system and referenced on the National 4-H Headquarters website.

Guidelines for 4-H Project Work

The 4-H Project is a key source of knowledge-based learning in 4-H. A project is a "semi-structured educational experiences in an interesting area chosen by the 4-H member." The project group would follow a "learn by doing" concept which is the motto of 4-H. Through 4-H project work, a member develops knowledge of a subject area, positive attitudes toward self and others and life skills for daily living.

Delaware 4-H has over 85 project areas that can be chosen by members that help to meet a wide range of interests. Members may choose to be part of one project area, two project areas or any number of project areas. There are no limits, but 4-H member should choose their number of project areas based on their time, ability and commitment to being actively engaged in each project group chosen. Parent support of 4-H project work is an important ingredient of a member's success.

For many project areas, curriculum manuals that are developed by various universities are available from the County 4-H Office. However, other resources can certainly be used to assist in the delivery and coordination of a 4-H project group. These resources could be various types of printed work in the designated project area, internet resources, knowledge and expertise of the project leader or other volunteers in the club or even knowledge and expertise of community members who can be solicited to work with, share or present information to the group. Project group meetings can consist of hands-on activities, speakers, tours or other types of presentations. The project group provides for both group as well as individualized learning, and work can be done as a group at a designated setting or can also be completed by the individual member at home or other locations.

Project work helps members to:

- Develop their knowledge, skills and problem solving abilities.
- Examine and study career opportunities.
- Develop favorable self-image and self-worth. Development of project skills and abilities increases the member's self-confidence and self-esteem.

Project groups meetings should be:

- Flexible – so that all members can take part.
- Meaningful – so that all members can learn.
- Useful – so that members feel the importance of the meeting and can relate what is learned.
- Interesting – so that members develop a motive for learning. Don't be afraid to have a surprise at meetings (something unexpected).
- Individual – so that members return home with a feeling of accomplishment and achievement.
- Unified – so that members learn through mental, physical and emotional means.

Project Goals should:

- Be realistic and measurable
- Meet the needs and interests of the project group members
- Provide individual achievement opportunities for each member.
- Be clear and understandable.

Other important concepts of 4-H Project work:

- Project Leaders should have a guideline for your project group.
- Project members should be allowed to progress to and learn at different levels each year. Members should be able to build on prior learning and learn at a pace that is appropriate to their personal age and level of development.
- Project Groups can set their respective meeting times. Groups can meet weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc. It is encouraged that project groups meet a minimum of 4-6 times a year. Project work may be better suited to be completed in a specified time frame so groups could have more concentrated meetings during a specific time period versus all throughout the year.
- Project Leaders should take into account any county and state planned events or activities which pertain to your project area when planning your calendar.
- Project group members should be encouraged to participate in County and State Judging Contests if one is available for the respective project group.
- Project leaders should encourage and assist members to keep records of project work activities and to submit project book record to the county level annually.

Appendix

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DELAWARE 4-H CLUB OFFICERS GUIDEBOOK

4-H CLUB:

PRESIDENT'S NAME:

VICE PRESIDENT'S NAME:

TREASURER'S NAME:

REPORTER'S NAME:

SECRETARY'S NAME:

COUNTY:

Characteristics of a Good Officer

- Active 4-H Participant in local, county and state activities
- Leader
- Role Model
- Friendly
- Enthusiastic
- Tactful
- Team Player
- Respectful
- Committed
- Dedicated
- Encourager
- Positive Attitude
- Prepared

Always let members know that their attendance and involvement at meetings and at county and state activities are important!

President & Vice President Responsibilities

Congratulations on being elected your 4-H club president or vice president! With the honor comes a number of responsibilities. This book will outline some of your basic duties and help you work with your club leaders and members to ensure a successful year. As you will soon see, there is more to being the president than running the meetings. You and the VP need to work with your club leaders (and perhaps even the rest of the executive officers) to plan the club programs and see that all activities are well-planned and presented. Don't be afraid to divide the tasks and ask others to help. If your club is fortunate to have older members who are not officers, get them involved in specific roles to help you and the club.

Remember that leading meetings is a skill that we all learn. You'll find it gets easier the longer you practice it! This skill is one that you will carry for a lifetime. You will be able to step into leadership positions in the community, in your business, and in your faith community using the skills you'll learn and polish as the 4-H Club President.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help from your advisors or the 4-H Agent. We all admire you for being elected President and want you to succeed.

You have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about your club, your members, and most importantly, about yourself in the coming year. Take advantage of this time to polish your leadership skills and inspire your club to truly Make the Best Better!

President / Vice President Duties:

- Provide assistance to club leaders
- Plan Agenda for club meeting (See Sample Agenda)
    - Review planned agenda with leader prior to meeting
    - Provide copy of agenda to other officers during meeting
- Assist and insure meeting room is set up and cleaned up for meetings
- Start meeting on time; end on time at a convenient time for everyone involved
- Run effective meetings. Keep the conversation focused on the issue at hand.
- Maintain Control of meetings (Vice President serves as Sgt. At Arms)
- Be Prepared (Knowledgeable of information being covered)
    - Provide good detail; explain 4-H programs and activities thoroughly.
- If you are unable to be at a meeting, contact and provide advance notice to Vice President.
- Require Secretary Minutes at each meeting (even in absence of Secretary)

- Require Treasurer Report at each meeting (even in absence of Treasurer)
- Involve other club members in meeting (Reports under Old Business, Motions, Selection of Committees)
- Encourage Safety Report at each meeting
- Encourage Health Report at each meeting
- Appoint Committees for club activities (Do not chair committees, nor appoint self to a committee, don't choose the same members for every committee, and choose different members to serve as chairpersons) (See sample committee sheet)
- Make meeting/club activities fun and educational. Use your meeting time wisely by setting up speakers or activities that relate to your club's focus. Do not default to crafts or unsupervised play time month after month or members (and their parents) will wonder what they are getting out of it.
- Plan and coordinate Speakers for club meetings; introduce speakers at each meeting
- Suggest possible tours for club members
- Be a good role model for other members in your club; be an active 4-H participant
- Encourage younger members to participate and be involved in 4-H—they are the future of your club!
- Be available for other club members; provide a telephone number or email address so they can contact you
- Encourage everyone in club to work together and help each other
- Don't just push ahead your ideas/thoughts; listen to your members and make democratic decisions.
- Cast deciding vote if necessary
- Work with other officers of club
- Work with leader and other officers to develop club program for year (see Sample Club Calendar)
- Determine Other Leadership Roles for Club Members:
    - Program: Speakers, Films, Videos, Demonstrations, Activities
    - Membership: New Member Recruitment
    - Recreation: Planned fun activity or game at each meeting
    - Community Service – Coordinates service activities to help others
    - Health Reporter – Provides health reports at meeting
    - Safety Reporter – Provides safety reports at meeting
    - Song Leader – Leads club members in songs at meetings

Treasurer Responsibilities

Congratulations! Your fellow 4-H club members have shown their confidence in you by entrusting to you the money of the club. As treasurer, you will be responsible for taking care of the club's money and bank accounts. This responsibility requires honesty, integrity, and cooperation with your club members and leaders.
As treasurer, you will:

- Handle all money matters for your 4-H club.
- Keep an accurate record of all money received and how all money is used.
- Inform the bank in which your club's funds are deposited that you are the new treasurer; sign, with your leader, appropriate forms so you can write checks on the account.
- Deposit all funds that your club earns or receives in the bank as soon as possible, or maintain funds in another safe place if no club account is opened. All clubs with cash over $100.00 should have bank accounts opened.
- Pay all approved bills promptly.
- Prepare and present a summary of all financial transactions at each club meeting. Include income (money received), expenses (money paid out), and a current balance (all money on hand) for all accounts – checking, savings, etc.
- Reconcile all bank statements received in a timely manner.
- Complete the Annual Club Audit Form at the end of the club year. When completed, remind your president to select an audit committee to review your records.
- Submit a copy of the Annual Club Audit Form to your County Extension Office by the date requested.
- Give the new treasurer complete and accurate records when he/she takes office.

Secretary Responsibilities

The Secretary keeps the permanent record of what the club does and handles its correspondence.

Duties : Tasks that a 4-H Secretary should complete for the group to be successful.

- Attend all club meetings and record accurate minutes.
- Put the club's plans for the year in the 4-H Secretary's Book.
- Organize the 4-H club roll of members.
- Call roll, record attendance and read minutes at meeting.
- Be responsible for all club correspondence.
- (Writes the club letters such as thank you and requests for information.)
- Read letters and all appropriate communications to the club.
- Fill out the secretary book and submit to club leader/county office.

If you plan to be absent, make minutes accessible to the other officers and club leaders. Remind members of special meetings. Make sure each member knows when and where the next meeting will be.

Minutes of a Meeting

The minutes of a meeting are record of what is done, not of what is said. They should contain:

- Name of club
- Place, date and officers present
- Number of members and visitors present
- Pledges and who led them
- Approval of previous minutes
- All reports and what was done about them
- Motions carried or lost, with the name of the person who made the motion
- Program and who did what
- The time the meeting adjourned

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Club Reporter Responsibilities

Club reporters have a very valuable role! Not only do you send in your club reports to share with other club members and the 4-H community, as the reporter you can also be an important link to your local community. The articles you write will let everyone know the wonderful things that 4-H'ers are accomplishing!

As a club reporter, this may be the first opportunity to see your name published. Newsletters are mailed county and state wide, and since they are also published on the internet, your words have the potential to reach a very wide audience! Seeing your name in print in a local newspaper is a thrilling and proud experience and can be the start of something big!

As you continue in your role of reporter, you will develop very important writing skills! You can create a portfolio or collection of your articles that can be used in project books, scrapbooks or to showcase your efforts for future schools and employment opportunities! The staff of your local 4-H office is more than glad to offer any additional guidance! After all, we are your biggest fan and look forward to seeing 4-H and your name in print! Fellow club members and others in your county 4-H community need and enjoy being kept up- to-date about what your club is doing. You can do that by submitting an article to your local 4-H office. Follow these guidelines:

- Maintain notes of club activities.
- Write and submit articles to the 4-H office for the newsletter. Be sure your club is represented. Other clubs will want to know what you are doing as well!
- Submit your article to the 4-H office. Are there any specifications you should be aware of?
    - Know the deadline for submitting articles. In reporting, deadlines are real and reporters need to take them seriously!
    - Ask the 4-H office what font and font size the article will be published.
    - Your article should be submitted in the same format so you can better judge article size. The editor of your newsletter is often limited to how much can go in a newsletter, so be aware of what is typical.
    - Ask if there is a word count limit.
    - Club news should be submitted (in order of preference):
- By E-mail. This is the most preferred method. The 4-H secretary can copy and paste your article immediately. In Sussex, E-mail articles to Walfred@udel.edu
- Pay special attention to: Submitting articles every month! Articles that cover several months are likely to be edited to just the previous month's news.
- Crediting members that participated in activities and events. Make sure you spell everyone's name correctly!
- Include photos. Pictures help support your story and attract readers. Be sure to include a descriptive caption to explain the photo. Who is pictured and what are they doing?

At A Glance...Basic Motions

President: Do I hear a motion?
1st Member: I move that... (never, "I make a motion that we...")
President: Is there a second?
2nd Member: I second the motion
President: Is there any discussion?
President: All those in favor say "Aye"
President: All those opposed say "Nay"
President: Motion Carried OR Motion is defeated
    Note: If in doubt of vote, ask for a show of hands.

Ways to vote at club meetings:

- Voice Vote
- Show of Hands
- Standing Vote
- Ballot
- Roll Call
- Honor System (Close Eyes; Raise Hands)

Routine Order of Business:

Call to Order
Pledges (Pledge of Allegiance, 4-H Pledge)
Secretaries Report
Treasurer's Report
Health/Safety Reports
(Committee Reports) Old Business
New Business Program*
Adjourn
Recreation

*When you have speakers or program presenters, offer them the opportunity to make their presentations after the Pledges so they do not end up sitting through your meeting. Another alternative that respects their time is to give them a particular time. If your meeting starts at 7:00 pm, have them come at 7:45 pm.

Parliamentary Procedure

Sometimes meetings are very chaotic when making group decisions. Everyone talks at once, trying to sway others to a different point of view. A basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure can make the group decision process more orderly. It is an important skill youth can use throughout life.

Parliamentary procedure is used by most groups as they conduct their meetings. A few examples where parliamentary procedure is practiced include Congress, county commissioners, school boards, local fair boards and county 4-H clubs and committees.

What Is Parliamentary Procedure[1]*?*

It is an organized method for a group to accomplish their goals in an effective, fair, and efficient manner. It is effective by providing an orderly way to conduct the group's business and make decisions. It is fair because it is a democratic process for making a decision. It is efficient by keeping the group focused. One item of business is disposed of before going on to another. Most parliamentary procedure is based on Robert's Rules of Order which describes procedures on how to conduct items of business.

4-H meetings are often the first exposure young people will have to parliamentary procedure. There are volumes of material written on the fine points of parliamentary procedure, but only the basics are necessary for 90% of the business conducted at a local 4-H club meeting. Start with the basics of parliamentary procedure in this fact sheet, then continue to "learn by doing."

The Motion

One of the basics of parliamentary procedure is how to move and dispose of a motion. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Recognition by the chair. A member seeks permission to speak to initiate a motion by simply raising his/her hand or standing and saying "Mister/Madam President..." When the president recognizes the member, that member has the floor and may speak.
2. The motion. A member should say, "I move that we buy a 4-H flag." It is not correct to say, "I make a motion that ..."
3. Second. The motion must receive a second before any discussion begins. A member does not need to be recognized to second a motion but just states, "I second the motion" or simply "Second". Obtaining a second indicates that at least two people favor discussing the motion. If there is no second, the motion is dropped.
4. Discussion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded, its merits can then be discussed. A

member of the group must first be recognized by the president. The member gives reasons for or against the motion to the group.

5. Vote. Discussion on a motion may end in three ways: (1) No one says anything; (2) A member says "I call for the question" which means that the member wants the motion brought to a vote, or (3) The president decides that there has been adequate discussion. Some methods of voting include: voice vote (aye/nay) , a show of hands, standing, roll call, or by secret ballot. The president should always call for both sides of the vote even if the vote appears to be unanimous. The president announces the result of the vote. "The motion passes/fails." A majority is needed to pass a motion. A majority is more than half of the members present and voting.

[1]Archer, T.M., Dill, D., and Weber, E.M., (no date). Parliamentary Procedure. Ohioline Fact Sheets. http://ohioline.ag.ohio-state.edu. Retrieved 11/07/2003

Amendments

There are times when members of the group will want to change the motion while it is in the discussion phase. This is called an amendment. It is recommended that only one amendment be permitted per motion. An amendment generally strikes out, adds, or substitutes words in the main motion. A motion has been moved and seconded and is being discussed. To amend a motion:

1. A group member is recognized by the president to speak, then says, "I move to amend the motion to buy a 4-H flag by adding the words 3 ft. x 5 ft."
2. A second to this amendment is required.
3. Discussion follows and is for only the amendment, not the original motion. In the example, members may discuss the merits of a 3 ft. x 5 ft. size of 4-H flag, not if they are to purchase a flag (original motion).
4. When it is time to vote, the president conducts a vote to determine if the amendment passes. A majority is needed.
5. If the amendment passed, discussion follows on the motion as amended. In our example, "I move that we buy a 3 ft. x 5 ft. 4-H flag."
6. After discussion, a vote is taken on the motion as amended. A majority is needed.
7. If the amendment did not pass, discussion on the original motion continues, which in our example, is "to buy a 4-H flag.
8. After discussion, a vote is taken on the motion. A majority vote is needed.

Tip: For less formal meetings, such as 4-H club meetings, it may be best to introduce complicated ideas by discussion before the motion is made. This eliminates the need for most amendments.

To Lay On Or Take From The Table

There are times when there is a reason to delay the decision on a motion. Perhaps there is not enough information to make a decision. The procedure to do this is called "laying on the table." This delays a decision until another time.

1. During discussion of a motion, a member is recognized by the president and says, "I move to lay the motion on the table."
2. Once again, a second is required.
3. There is no discussion permitted. The group proceeds directly to vote whether to table the motion or not. A majority is needed.
4. To bring back the motion so it can be discussed and acted upon, is called "taking from the table." While in old business, a member says, "I move to take from the table (motion's name)."
5. A second is required.
6. There is no discussion permitted. The group proceeds to vote whether to bring the motion from the table or not. A majority is needed. Once a motion has been brought back from the table, it is the next item of business.

Tip: Generally, a tabled motion comes back for consideration at the next regular meeting. Don't use the motion to table as a way to "kill" a motion.

Adjournment

Adjournment is used to end the meeting.

1. To adjourn the meeting, a member is recognized by the president and says, "I move that we adjourn."
2. Once again a second is required.
3. There is no discussion permitted. The group proceeds to vote whether to end the meeting or not. A majority is needed.

A motion to adjourn can be given at any time during a meeting, but hopefully will not be misused by club members to adjourn prematurely when there is important business yet to be addressed.

References

Robert, Henry M. (1970). Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL, 1970.

Sample Agenda

Creative Clovers 4-H Club Thursday, October 20, 200-

1. Call to Order
2. Pledges (Pledge of Allegiance, 4-H Pledge)
3. Roll Call/Secretaries Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Health/Safety Reports
6. Committee Reports
    a. Membership
    b. Community Service
7. Old Business
    a. National 4-H Week events
    b. County Achievement Event
8. New Business
    a. Fund-Raiser for Year-end trip
    b. Community Service for Holidays
    c. County Public Speaking Contest
    d. Project Selection
9. Adjourn

Sample Committee Sheet

Committees meet between club meetings to organize or conduct their activity. Committee Chairs should be ready to report on their activities. The Membership Committee works together to recruit new members, then report on what they did, where they recruited, and how many new members they've brought into the club.

Creative Clovers 4-H Club

Executive Committee: Brian (President), Tom (VP), Roberta (Treasurer), Freda (Secretary)
Program: Tom (chair), Anna, Concetta, Tiffani
Membership: Helen (chair), Diane, Ed, Freda Recreation: Ginger (chair), Preeti, Jan,
Community Service: Anna (chair), Diane, Mary, Nick
Refreshments: Roberta (coordinator) (each family assigned a different month)
Health Reporter: Nick
Safety Reporter: Ed Song
Leader: Ms. Diane Denver

Details regarding the purpose of the committee, progress towards goal, and next steps.

Sample Club Calendar

Note: Each club's activities should support the project/s taken in the club as well as county and state events. So, a horse club's activities will vary greatly from an Environmental club's and both of these will be different from a general club. This calendar is intended to give you some ideas about organizing the year's programs so that your members are prepared and ready for upcoming events.

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Sample Club Calendar

SEPTEMBER
Discuss: Planning next year
Election of Officers
New Members
Preliminary Project Selection
Celebrate: County Award Events
ENROLLMENT SEASON OPENS

OCTOBER
Discuss: Make A Difference Day Project
Prepare: LifeSmarts and Public Speaking
Celebrate: Halloween Parade

NOVEMBER
Discuss: Christmas Service Activity
Plan: Club Christmas Party
Prepare: Favorite Foods Recipes

DECEMBER
Discuss: Project Books
Prepare: Skill-A-Thon and Judging Contests
Celebrate: Christmas Party!
Deadline: Enrollment Season

JANUARY
Discuss: Spring Activities
Prepare: Favorite Foods, Skill-A-Thons and Judging Contests
Plan: Progress updates on LifeSmarts, and Public Speaking

FEBRUARY
Discuss: County Demonstrations Contest
Plan/Brainstorm: Fund-Raiser for Club or 4-H Foundation

MARCH
Discuss: Fundraising ideas
Plan: Easter/Spring Activity
Prepare: State, Environmental, and Day Camp Applications

APRIL
Discuss: Ag Day at UD
Prepare: State Fair Events
Prepare: Record and Project Books
STATE FAIR ENROLLMENT OPENS APRIL 1

MAY
Discuss: Summer Events. Packing for a successful camp experience.
Execute: Fundraiser.
Activity: Encourage Members to write Thank You notes to patrons.
Due: National 4-H Congress Application
Due: Foundation Scholarship Applications

JUNE
Discuss: Summer Events
Prepare: Record/Project Books
Prepare: Sign-up as Helpers and/or Host/Hostess at Delaware State Fair

JULY
Pick-up Fair Passes from County Office
Plan: Drop-off Club's Fair Exhibits

AUGUST
Discuss: Record/Project Books
Prepare: Window/Banner Display Contest

Sample Thank you Note to Patrons

Mr. Jim Blessing 202 Old Mine Road Milford, DE 19963

Dear Mr. Blessing

On behalf of the Clover 4-H Club, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for providing our club a tour of your greenhouse on October 20th. Our club members learned a lot about soil mixtures and how to identify many flowers. We also really enjoyed being able to start cuttings from geraniums and planting the flowerpots of petunias.

It was very kind of you to take your time to share this fun and learning experience with us. Thank you for your support of our 4-H program.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith
4-H Club Member

Handling Money

As treasurer of your 4-H club, you're in charge of "keeping the books." This includes your club's receipt book, checkbook and check register, and bank statements. You can meet the important responsibilities required of a treasurer by studying and following these recommended procedures. These steps are important whether your group has a small or large amount of money. Conflicts may arise if money is not handled carefully and accurately. You can protect yourself and your 4-H club from conflict by being careful, responsible, and accurate as you handle your club's finances.

Receipts

You must always write a receipt when you receive money for club dues, a donation, or a fund-raising activity. Without a receipt there is no way to prove that your 4-H club received a specific amount of money or that you handled it correctly.

Your 4-H club should have a receipt book with pre numbered, two-part receipts. Receipt books are available from most office supply stores. If you make a mistake and have to void a receipt for any reason, write "VOID" on both copies, staple them together, and keep with the

Receipts for Dues

You don't need to write a receipt for each individual person paying dues. Create a Dues Form table total the amount paid for the meeting and write one receipt for the total amount.

Receipts for Money from Fund-raisers

If your club holds a fund-raiser such as a car wash or bake sale, you do not need to write a receipt for each person buying a cookie or having his/her car washed, but you (or the shift leader) need to write one at the end of each shift or at the end of the day. Each group of workers must account for the money it received.

Two people should count the money, agree on the amount, and turn the money over to you. It's a good idea for you to verify the amount (recount the money) in the presence of the people giving you the money. Be certain to give them a receipt for the amount they gave you.

Bank Deposits

Before you deposit checks that are made payable to your 4-H club, they must be endorsed (signed) on the back. Write "For Deposit Only," sign the club name (as written on the front of the check) and then sign your name followed with a comma (,) and the word "Treasurer." If someone writes a check payable to you that is intended for your 4-H club, endorse it by writing "Pay to the order of (your club name)" and signing it. If your club receives many checks, you may want to have a rubber stamp made with the club name and account number on it.
Sample "For Deposit Only" rubber stamp

Preparing Deposits

Deposit all funds promptly. Total the receipts you have written since your last deposit and compare that amount with the amount of cash (bills and coins) and checks you intend to deposit. The two figures should agree. If they do not, repeat the process. When the two figures do agree, prepare a deposit slip. Deposit slips are usually found in the back of a checkbook or you may get a supply from the bank. When you fill out a deposit slip, list each check number and its amount separately (use the back of the deposit slip if necessary).

Approving and Paying Bills

Part of your monthly treasurer's report at club meetings should include asking for and receiving club member's approval to pay the club's outstanding bills. After the members approve paying the bills, ask the Club Leader to initial the bill to indicate club approval of

payment, then write a check for the approved amount of each bill.

The usual way to pay bills is with a check. Holding cash back from deposits and using it to pay bills is not a good practice, because it does not leave a record or provide proof of payment. If you pay by cash, get a receipt.

Checks

Follow these steps when writing checks:

Always use ink. Never erase a mistake. If you make a mistake, write "VOID" on the spoiled check and start a new one. Keep the voided check with the treasurer's records, do not throw it away. Leave as little space as possible between the figures and words when filling in the amount lines. This helps prevent someone else from changing a $15 check, for example, into a $115 check.

Begin writing the amount at the extreme left of the amount line. Be sure the written amount agrees with the numeric amount. Avoid writing checks for less than $1, but if you have to, start the amount line by writing the word "Only" and then the amount.

Sign the check with your "authorized" signature, the same way you signed the Signature Card at the bank when you became treasurer. (If two signatures are required, the second person listed on the account must also sign each check.)

Maintaining the Check Register

To keep your 4-H club's check register up to date, follow these steps:

- Write the check number and date it was written in the appropriate columns.
- Write the name of the person or company the check was made out to in the "description of transaction" column.
- Enter the check amount in the "payment/debit" column. Then subtract the check amount from the remaining balance in the line above and enter the new balance.
- At the end of each month reconcile the account; this means that you will compare your records against the bank statement. Mark off the checks and deposits that have cleared the bank (this information is included on the bank statement or the checks that have been returned to you).
- Record the deposit amount(s) in the "deposit/credit" column. Then add the deposit amount to the account balance and record the new account balance in the last column.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report informs members of the club's financial activity for the past month. You should present a "Monthly Treasurer's Report" at each club meeting and present, for the club's approval, the bills to be paid in the next month.

After the club has reviewed your treasurer's report, a member moves to accept the treasurer's report. The motion is seconded and the club votes on the motion. If the motion is approved, the secretary enters the treasurer's report into the minutes. All bank statements, bills, monthly treasurer's reports, annual summary financial reports, and receipt books become part of the club's permanent records.

Bank Statement Reconciliation

As Treasurer, you are responsible for reconciling all bank statements received on a timely basis. Instructions to complete this reconciliation are normally found with your bank statement. This process involves taking the bank statement balance, adding all deposits listed in your checkbook that are not yet reflected on your bank statement, and subtracting all checks listed in your checkbook that have not yet been paid and reflected on your bank statement. The resulting adjusted bank statement balance should agree to the balance listed in your checkbook. If you are unable to get these two balances to agree, first contact your leader for assistance.

If you are still unable to balance, contact your local bank for assistance. All bank statements and reconciliations become part of the club's permanent records.

Clubs Without Bank Accounts

Some clubs operate without checking or savings accounts. Even without a bank account, clubs must follow certain guidelines.

Clubs without bank accounts must follow the same bill paying system as clubs with bank accounts. The main difference is that you will purchase money orders or cashier's checks from a bank to pay bills instead of using the club's own checks.
Do not use a leader or adult's personal checks to pay bills for your club. All other financial rules and guidelines for clubs with bank accounts apply to clubs without bank accounts.

Annual Financial Summary/Club Audit

The “Annual Financial Summary” is due in your county Extension Office by March 15th of each year. This report summarizes your club’s financial activity for the period of January 1st through December 31st of the current 4-H year. The report should be completed by an audit committee selected by the club. Members of the committee must include 2 adults and 2 members, all who are not related to the club Treasurer. An audit questionnaire has been developed to assist you in performing your club’s annual review. Please complete this questionnaire and forward a copy of the document to the county Office with your annual financial summary.

How to Improve Your Writing Style

Writing concise sentences that are to the point.

The following club report is typical of what has been submitted before as club articles:

Not very exciting is it? This article needs a little work. When there are several clubs reporting in the same manner… well, it can be boring! How can we make a report like this more interesting?

- Credit who participated in your club. If there are just a couple of people, name them, otherwise simply list the number.
- On some events, elaborate a little. Instead of saying "it was fun" say why. The fun part will be understood!
- Instead of saying" "…and then we talked about… and then we talked about, etc…" use comas to break up the categories and make it more concise. For example: "We talked about the Public Speaking, Demonstration and Pumpkin Contests."
- Use other ways of saying "New Business". For instance, try "Our next goals" or "In upcoming events we plan to…"? Remember, although business meetings (including 4-H) follow a certain pattern and procedure, meetings don't have to be reported in that way! A reporter is NOT a secretary recounting minutes…you can write a creative article about what occurred at your meeting! Remember, many people are reading your article!
- Make an event sound exciting! It's not hard to do! Add a little comment.
- Consider that whoever is reading your column might not know about the event, and your comment might make them eager to find out more!
- Your report doesn't have to just be about your club meeting. What exciting things did you do for the entire month?
- REMEMBER: Your report doesn't have to sound like the secretary's minutes!
- Pretend that your friend missed your club's meeting. How would you tell them what happened over the phone?

Reporters Advertise the Benefits of 4-H

Some people may be reading about 4-H for the very first time, and they may be reading your words! Although articles for newspapers may contain much of the same information you put in your club reports, they are written differently. Likely, most articles submitted will be about a single event that has already occurred or is ready to happen.

Reporters Should:

- Read their local newspapers. Clip articles similar to the ones they would like to submit in the future. Imitate techniques that have been published!
- Learn and make a note of who the editor is, or who reports on local community events such as yours. This should be your contact person in the future.
- Include a cover letter. The cover letter should state who you are, your role in the club/ organization, your address, a phone number for verification. Papers will never publish anything without first verifying the source. Refer to Examples in the back of this guidebook.
- Along with the article, enclose a picture or two. A formal group shot is fine, but also consider an action shot showing 4-H'er(s) doing the activity. Pictures with people smiling are irresistible!
- The back of the photograph should be labeled, dated, with participants named.
- Mount the photograph lightly with tape on a regular sheet of paper. Identify who is in the photograph. Look how it is done in your local paper. Normally, people are labeled back row first, from left to right. Then the front row or seated row, again from left to right. MENTION THOSE NOT PHOTOGRAPHED but who were in attendance. " Not shown: Suzie Clover, Dudley Dogooder"
- Credit the photographer

- State the date (specifically or "recently" to provide context), the occasion, the reason, the number who attended from your club, what your club is, and what was accomplished.
- Keep it basic. Elaborate only slightly. Always put 4-H in your headline

A fresh pair of eyes provides the best proofreading.

Read your article out loud. Awkward writing will show itself by this method. Sometimes your eyes will fool you. You think you wrote something because that is what you are thinking. When you read aloud it can uncover many mistakes.

Use a Thesaurus! A What? A Thesaurus is a resource book – somewhat like a dictionary; a favorite among writers. It will offer a writer different choices for words that mean the same thing…also known as synonyms! You will be surprised how many ways there are to say 'fun'!

Professional writers have many editors look over their writing before it gets published. So you should too! Give your article to a parent, leader, English teacher, older sibling, or friend to look over.

Reporting Tools of the Trade

As a reporter, you are learning that words are very important in expressing a feeling, describing an event or telling a story. Good writing skills are your very best tool to becoming an ace reporter! But there are other tools too that you can use. A good photograph can often tell, or help to relate a very special moment. Reporters often work very closely with a photographer, known as a photo-journalist, to make their reports have greater impact.

Consider electing a club photographer…someone who could be responsible for photographing key events for your club. This would be a great opportunity for someone who is taking a photography project! The club photographer could also act as photo-editor and collect and review submitted photographs taken by other club members that would best represent your club. Let everyone in the club know who the photo-editor is so that their photographs can be shared.

Give news outlets many choices. Include both posed and candid shots. The more choices you offer, the more chances your work will be published! Remember: Happy smiling faces are irresistible!

Wear 4-H T-shirts to events! That way, they will show up in the photographs!