

# Overton County 4-H

Youth/Parent/ Volunteer Code of Conduct Contract

## The Purpose

The purpose of this form is to set up 4-H youth, parents, volunteers, and extension for success when participating in 4-H each year.

Our first priority is to create a safe, inclusive space for learning, sharing, and collaborating. We welcome people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Diversity is a key value of 4-H.

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status.

All 4-H participants- youth, families, volunteers, and extension staff- in or attending any activity or event sponsored by the University of Tennessee's Extension program are required to uphold these values and conduct themselves according to these standards. The standards also apply to online activity, including social media and internet presence.

## Ground Rules

Overton County 4-H holds their community to a high set of standards.

As a 4-H Participant/parent/guardian, I will obey these ground rules:

1. **Create a Welcoming Environment for All.** Encourage everyone to fully participate in University of Tennessee Extension and 4-H. Recognize that all people have skills and talents that can help others and improve the community. Though we will not always agree, we must disagree respectfully. When we disagree, try to understand why.
2. **Bring Your Best Self.** Respect and follow all Cooperative Extension rules, policies, and guidelines. Youth, parents, and volunteers shall obey the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development Event and Activity Misconduct Guidelines Form F834. Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, self-control, and self-direction from other's perspectives. Accept the results and outcomes of 4-H contests with grace and empathy for other participants. Accept the final opinions of judges and evaluators. Be open to new ideas, suggestions, and opinions of others.
3. **Participate Fully.** Youth, parents, and volunteers shall participate fully in all programs outlined for the activity or event. Work cooperatively with Extension Staff, Volunteers, 4-H'ers, and all involved in 4-H programs and activities. Participate in a way

that insures the safety, well-being, and quality of the educational experiences of self and others. Have Fun! If you are unable to attend, contact the extension agent in advance. Participate in county, regional, and state activities and events as much as possible to gain a well-rounded 4-H experience. Help plan future 4-H community service projects, exhibits, workshops and demonstrations as needed.

4. **Stay up to date.** Read 4-H mail, related texts, reminds, and social media posts in a timely fashion. Respond in a timely fashion to extension agents about being involved. Check the websites (county, regional, and state), including social media, for updates on opportunities.
5. **Communicate.** Youth talk to your parents and guardians about meetings, projects and activities. Parents and guardians, talk to your youth about upcoming responsibilities in 4-H. You are responsible for keeping a current 4-H calendar of meetings and activities. It is your responsibility to meet your assigned duties and to ask for help as needed. Communicate with others about your 4-H experiences. Invite new people to meetings and provide them with the information needed to fully participate.
6. **Be a team player.** Be responsible to the reasonable requests of the people in charge. Respect the integrity of the group and the group's decisions.
7. **Create a Safe Environment.** Do not carelessly or intentionally harm youth or adults in any way (verbally, mentally, physically or emotionally). Refrain from romantic displays and sexual activities either in public or private situations. Be kind and compassionate towards others. Do not insult or put down other participants. Harassment, bullying and other exclusionary behavior are not acceptable. Be considerate and courteous of all youth and adults and their property.
  - a. Youth, parents, and volunteers shall show respect for the property and facilities used during the activity, event, or club meeting and assume financial responsibility for any damages they cause.
  - b. Report any and all accidents, physical or verbal abuse, or unsafe conditions that threaten the emotional or physical well-being of others or yourself to the Extension Agent or Volunteer as soon as possible. Volunteers and 4-H leaders are to report this to the next level of leadership.
8. **Be a positive role model.** Youth, parents, and volunteers conduct at all times shall be appropriate to the standards and image of the 4-H Program. Act in a mature, responsible manner, recognizing you are role models for others, and that you are representing yourself, the University of Tennessee, and the 4-H Youth Development Program. Be responsible for your behavior. This includes using positive and affirming language and upholding exemplary standards of conduct at all 4-H activities. Swearing, using negative language, putting others down, and demanding special privileges is setting a bad example.
9. **Be respectful to the environment.** Demonstrate the responsible treatment of animals and stewardship to the environment. Make sure places you visit are better than when you arrived.
10. **Dress appropriately.** Use your best judgement when participating. Wear clothing suited for the activity you are participating in. Clothing promoting alcohol, and other

intoxicants, or displaying messages that are racist sexist, homophobic, political or any other degrading message that detrimentally affects the dignity and respect of members of our community are never acceptable. Do not wear revealing clothing, such as short skirts or shorts, midriff-baring tops, pants with holes, and sagging pants. If an event requires specific attire that is not within your budget, the 4-H agent can help you find some from a donor. If you are unsure about what is appropriate, contact UT Extension Overton County in advance.

11. **Obey the Law.** Commit NO illegal acts. Tobacco products, illegal drug use, alcohol, weapons, fireworks, and any other item that could cause injury or bodily harm will not be tolerated at any 4-H event or activity. This includes the use of these products prior or during. This includes the distribution of these products. For adults, tobacco use must be off UT Extension Property.
12. **Adhere to program specific policies.** Each program may have additional program rules, curfews, dress codes, and policies. All involved are responsible for obeying those rules. You are responsible for all information listed in 4-H handbooks, 600a forms, and 4-H activity policies.
13. **A 4-H member, parent, or volunteer is still a 4-H member, parent, or volunteer both in and out of club meetings.** Following these guidelines is a good rule for life. You are responsible for your conduct both in and out of club meetings. Conduct yourself in a manner that makes yourself, your family, 4-H club, school, county and state proud.

All those involved in 4-H understand and accept the responsibility for following the above guidelines, and realize that failure to do so many result in the participant being sent home from the activity or event at his or her own expense and/or made ineligible to participate in future 4-H events or activities. You understand that failure to comply with these rules and/or failing to meet these expectations could result in a temporary ban, permanent ban, or removing someone from a leadership position.

## Types of Misbehavior

Violators should have the opportunity to explain actions to staff in charge of an event. Behavior that is disruptive to the event will be documented and a letter describing such will be sent to regional office, county agents, and parents/guardians of those involved. The offenses below are examples from the state level. However, clubs might set their own consequences in addition to these. Examples of offenses include but are not limited to:

### Minor Offenses

1. Habitually late to program activities.
2. Not in a room at a designated time.
3. Not demonstrating good manners or conduct described in this contract.
4. Using language that is offensive to others.
5. Not respecting the rights and privacy of others attending an activity.
6. Untruthfulness to chaperones, leaders, event organizers, or others in attendance.

7. Not abiding by dress code policies.

### Intermediate Offenses

1. Leaving a 4-H activity without permission of staff or volunteers in charge
2. Damage to a meeting site, event site, or other person's property without malicious intent.

### Major Offense

1. Intentional damage to a meeting site, event, or other person's property
2. Use of or distribution of tobacco, alcohol, vaping, drugs, or weapons.
3. Carrying an unauthorized weapon.
4. Threatening another person with verbal harm, with a weapon, or causing bodily harm.
5. Cheating
6. Sexual misconduct
7. Theft of any kind
8. Disobeying the law.

### Consequences of Misbehavior

For every offense, whether minor, intermediate or major, the 4-H member will receive a verbal reprimand. Letters of apology shall be written to the appropriate people by the violator.

### Major Offenses

- Automatic removal from event, activity, or club meeting and/or sending participant home at the parents'/guardians' expense.
- Two major offenses during the 4-H year is automatic suspension of membership in all Tennessee 4-H Youth Development programs for the remainder of the year, along with the possibility of facing criminal charges, depending on offense. In addition, 4-H member may be asked to resign from all 4-H offices or leadership roles held or give up monetary awards or scholarships from the Tennessee 4-H program.

### Intermediate Offenses

- One or two violations is grounds for removal from the event/activity and or/sending a participant home at the parents'/guardians' expense.
- Three major offenses during the 4-H year is automatic suspension of membership in all Tennessee 4-H Youth Development programs for the remainder of the year, along with the possibility of facing criminal charges, depending on offense. In addition, 4-H member may be asked to resign from all 4-H offices or leadership roles held or give up monetary awards or scholarships from the Tennessee 4-H program.

## Minor Offenses

- Consistent problems requiring more than two reprimands is grounds for sending a 4-H member home the parent /guardians' expense.
- Habitual discipline problems requiring more than four reprimands during the 4-H year is automatic suspension of membership in all Tennessee 4-H Youth Development programs for the remainder of the year, along with the possibility of facing criminal charges, depending on offense. In addition, 4-H member may be asked to resign from all 4-H offices or leadership roles held or give up monetary awards or scholarships from the Tennessee 4-H program.

## Course of Action

Club, Event, and program managers are responsible for upholding the conduct described. 4-H members and parents should report any violations to these codes of conduct in a timely fashion to either the 4-H volunteer or the 4-H Extension Agent. Volunteers are to report to the 4-H extension agent. The extension agent and county director will implement all procedures necessary.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by Overton County's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

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4-H Member's Name

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4-H Members' Signature

Date

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4-H Parent or Volunteer's Name

Date

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4-H Parent or Volunteer's Signature

Date

*Please return this signed document before the first club meeting.*