

Tennessee 4-H Youth Development Event and Activity Misconduct Management Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of the Event and Activity Misconduct Management Model is to provide Extension staff members assistance in dealing with misconduct at 4-H activities and events.

Code of Conduct (as adapted from F600A)

- A. 4-H'ers shall be in their rooms and quiet at the time determined by Extension personnel and leaders. Boys are not to go into girls' rooms and girls are not to go into boys' rooms.
- B. 4-H'ers shall participate fully in all programs outlined for the activity or event.
- C. 4-H'ers shall show respect for the property and facilities used during the activity or event and assume financial responsibility for any damages they cause.
- D. 4-H'ers conduct at all times shall be appropriate to the standards and image of the 4-H program. Tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, weapons, fireworks and any other items that could cause injury or bodily harm will not be tolerated at any 4-H event or activity.

Parents and 4-H'ers understand and accept the responsibility for following the above guidelines, and realize that failure to do so may result in a 4-H'er 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.

Types of Misbehavior

Violators should have the opportunity to explain actions to the professional Extension staff in charge. Behavior that is disruptive to the event will be documented and a letter describing such will be sent to the regional office, county Extension agent(s) and parents/guardians of those involved. Examples of offenses include, but are not limited to:

Minor Offenses

- Habitually late to program activities
- Not in room at designated time
- Not demonstrating good manners
- Using language that is offensive to others
- Not respecting the rights and privacy of roommates or others attending an activity
- Untruthfulness to chaperones, leaders, event organizers or others in attendance

Intermediate Offenses

- Inappropriate visitation
- Leaving a 4-H activity without the permission of staff member(s) in charge
- Intentional damage to meeting site, sleeping quarters, person(s) or other person's property

Major Offenses

- Smoking or using tobacco products
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Carrying an unauthorized weapon
- Threatening another person with a weapon or bodily harm
- Cheating
- Theft of any kind
- Sexual misconduct

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 and/or sending a participant home at the parents'/guardians' expense.
- Two major offenses during any 4-H year is automatic suspension of membership in all Tennessee 4-H Youth Development programs for the remainder of the 4-H 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 violations during one calendar year is grounds for the 4-H member to not be allowed in any county, region or state activities for the remainder of the 4-H year. In addition, 4-H member may be asked to resign from all 4-H offices or leadership roles held and/or to give up monetary awards or scholarships from the Tennessee 4-H Youth Development program.

Minor Offenses

- Consistent discipline problems requiring more than two reprimands is grounds for sending a 4-H member home at the parents'/guardians' expense.
- Habitual discipline problems requiring more than four reprimands during one calendar year is grounds for the 4-H member to not be allowed in any county, region or state activities for the remainder of the 4-H year. In addition, 4-H member may be asked to resign from all 4-H offices or leadership roles held or to give up monetary awards or scholarships from the Tennessee 4-H program.

Course of Action

Event managers responsible for 4-H events and activities are encouraged to communicate to 4-H participants and adult chaperones prior to the event a standard of acceptable behavior, via the F600A. Standards of behavior and consequences of misbehavior should be reviewed with participants as part of the initial orientation.

In the event of a breach of the code of conduct, the event manager shall:

1. Obtain all the relevant facts.
2. Brief the on-site adult responsible for the youth delegate (Extension staff member or 4-H volunteer)
3. If not on-site, but available via phone, brief the county Extension staff member and region office faculty member responsible.
4. Review consequences of misbehavior. The following steps should be taken when sending a 4-H member home:
 - a. Extension staff member contacts parents.
 - b. Parents advised that child is being sent home by safest, most direct means, and that parents are responsible for the cost.
 - c. Event manager decides if parents should be given the option of picking up the child.
 - d. County Extension staff member collects money from parent to pay transportation charges.
 - e. Event manager sends follow-up correspondence to appropriate county Extension staff member, regional office staff member, child and parent for documentation.
5. For each reprimand given for an intermediate and/or a major incident, a Summary Letter and Report of Occurrence Form will be completed and mailed to the 4-H member, parent, county Extension agent(s), regional office staff member responsible, county Extension director (if applicable), 4-H specialist responsible, and the Assistant Director of 4-H Youth Development. Additionally, notification will be made to the regional office prior to letter and form being mailed.

Review Board

4-H members who are in disagreement with the decision of the leader(s) in charge of an activity or event may request a review board. The person coordinating the event may also convene a review board for the purposes of determining what has occurred and what disciplinary action should be taken. A review board will consist of two Extension faculty or staff members (including the Extension faculty or staff member coordinating the event), two adult volunteer leaders and three 4-H members (including the highest ranking member of the youth leadership team [i.e. State 4-H Council, Regional All Star Council, etc. present at the event]). The Extension faculty or staff member coordinating the event shall serve as the chairperson of the review board. Disciplinary action should only be discussed with those involved, their parents/guardians and their Extension leaders.

Adapted by M. Patrick Hamilton, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development