



NYS 4-H Code of Conduct 2025-2026

Our first priority is to create a safe, inclusive space for learning, sharing, and collaboration welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives. Diversity includes, but is not limited to: race, color, religion, political beliefs, national or ethnic origin, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, transgender status, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, educational level, learning style, physical appearance, body size, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities. CCE actively supports equal educational and employment opportunities. No person shall be denied admission to any educational program or activity on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination. CCE is committed to the maintenance of affirmative action programs that will assure the continuation of such equality of opportunity.

All 4-H Participants—youth, families, volunteers, and Extension staff—in or attending any activity or event sponsored by Cornell University's Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) 4-H Youth Development Program are required to uphold the values of the NYS 4-H program and conduct themselves according to these standards. The standards also apply to online activity, including social media internet presence.

Ground Rules

The following Ground Rules apply to all 4-H participants and volunteers. In addition to these expectations, CCE volunteers are accountable to additional expectations outlined in the CCE Volunteer Code of Conduct. Extension staff is accountable to additional standards of professionalism that are outlined by position descriptions and CCE human resource policies.

- 1. Create a Welcoming Environment for All.** Encourage everyone to fully participate in CCE 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 Cooperative Extension rules, policies, and guidelines that relate to 4-H Youth Programs and Events. Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, self-control, and self-direction. 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. Obey the Law.** Commit no illegal acts. Do not possess or use illegal drugs, tobacco products, firearms, weapons, or any harmful object with the intent to hurt others at any time. (Firearms are allowed only as part of supervised 4-H Shooting Sports programming.) Do not attend CCE or 4-H activities under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances.
- 4. Honor Diversity – Yours and Others'.** Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all staff, volunteers, families, and youth who participate in CCE and 4-H programs. Follow [Cornell Cooperative Extension Non-Discrimination Policy](#).
- 5. 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 aren't acceptable. Be considerate and courteous of all youth and adults and their property.
 - a. Youth must stay in the designated dormitory lodging areas:** boys may not be in girls' dormitory or lodging areas and girls may not be in boys' dormitory or lodging areas.



- 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 NYS 4-H, Extension staff, and Event Coordinators as soon as possible.
6. **Be a Team Player.** Work cooperatively with Extension staff, volunteers, 4-Hers, and all involved in 4-H programs and activities. Be responsive to the reasonable requests of the person in charge. Respect the integrity of the group and the group's decisions.
7. **Participate Fully.** Participate in all of the planned programs, be on time and follow through on assigned tasks/responsibilities (including the completion of required records or reports) in a manner that insures the safety, well-being, and quality of the educational experience for self and others. Have fun!
8. **Watch What You Wear.** Use your best judgment. Wear clothing suited for the activity you will participate in. Clothing promoting alcohol and other intoxicants, or displaying messages that are racist, sexist, homophobic, or any other degrading message that detrimentally impacts the dignity and respect of members of our community are never acceptable. Don't wear revealing clothing, such as short skirts or shorts, midriff-baring tops, and sagging pants. If you are unsure about what is appropriate, contact the local CCE 4-H Educator in charge in advance.
9. **Be a Positive Role Model.** Act in a mature, responsible manner, recognizing you are role models for others, and that you are representing yourself, CCE, and the 4-H Youth Development Program. Be responsible for your behavior, use positive and affirming language, and uphold exemplary standards of conduct at all 4-H activities.

Consequences

Any of the following may be used, depending on severity of the situation:

1. Participant will receive a verbal warning.
2. Participant may remain at the event/activity, but may possibly be barred from a future event.
3. Participant may be asked to leave the event/activity. If a youth, the parent(s) will be called and the youth will be sent home at family's expense.

I have read and understand the above and will abide by the NYS 4-H Youth Development Code of Conduct.

_____ Signature of 4-H Youth	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian (if youth)	_____ Date

Photo Release Consent

- ☐ By checking this box, I agree to allow Wayne County 4-H and CCE Staff take my 4-H member's picture for use in publications and social media.

Acknowledgement of Risk Form – 4-H Member/Equine Member
This form must be completed to participate in 4-H Equine clubs and related activities.

This form may be completed during 4-H enrollment for the full program year for 4-H equine activities and events designated below at the club, county, multiple county, regional, state and national level.

I hereby apply for my child to participate in the 4-H club and/or activity indicated below to be conducted by the designated Cornell Cooperative Extension Association and acknowledge as follows:

I fully understand and acknowledge that there are inherent risks and dangers in my child's participation in the 4-H club and activities and my child's participation in said 4-H club and all its activities and use of any equipment related to such activities may result in injury, illness or death and damage to personal property. I understand other participants, accidents, forces of nature or other causes may cause these risks and dangers and I hereby accept these risks and dangers.

My child is in good health and is at or above the minimum age of eight (8) for regular 4-H Equine club members required to participate in this activity and is able to participate in any strenuous physical activity associated therewith.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of _____ County

DATE(S): 4-H Program Year: October 1, 20____ - September 30, 20____

4-H CLUB EQUINE ACTIVITY:

- ☐ Participating in an equine club
- ☐ Working with equines beyond club level including clinics, camps, shows
- ☐ Working with equines in mounted "over fences" activities. *I (the parent or legal guardian) am aware that my child will be participating in 4-H Horse Program mounted "over fences" activities at Cornell University Cooperative Extension county, multiple county, regional, or state sponsored events. I give my child permission to participate. Mounted "over fences" classes in the NYS 4-H Horse Program could include ground rail, cross rail, and/or other over fences classes and obstacles (this does include trail class). The obstacles will be no higher than three (3) foot in any of the 4-H activities.*
- ☐ All of the above

I have read the above and by signing it I agree it is my intention to have my child participate in the indicated activity and I understand and accept the risks involved.

This shall be binding on my heirs, successors, assigns, administrators and executors. Any claims or disputes arising out of my child's participation in the activity shall be venued in the Supreme Court of the State of New York of the County where the County Extension office is located.

I am at least twenty-one (21) years of age and I am the legal parent/guardian authorized to sign this document on behalf of the child named herein.

PARTICIPANT'S PRINTED NAME(S) _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PARENT GUARDIAN NAME (print): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

This form must be kept on file until participant reaches age twenty-one (21).

