4-H Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service
Department of 4-H Youth Development

I. Purpose and Application:

A. The 4-H Code of Conduct is intended to foster a safe environment that is conducive to optimal learning and growth. Toward that end, youth participants are expected to behave in a way that respects the rights and property of others, and that will not disrupt or interfere with 4-H program goals.

B. This 4-H Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure is a condition of participation in any North Carolina 4-H activities or programs.

II. Behaviors Prohibited at 4-H program Activities:

A. Possession, selling, and/or use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, and illegal drugs OR being present where individuals are using alcohol, tobacco products and/or any illegal substances

B. Any kind of sexually-related physical contact

C. Possession of weapons or firearms (except while participating in a 4-H Shooting Sports Event)

D. Behavior that violates state or local laws

E. Damage to property of others

F. Theft, misuse or abuse of public or personal property

G. Conduct that jeopardizes the safety of self or others

H. Conduct that disrupts or interferes with 4-H programming

I. Leaving a program or facility without permission of parents or 4-H staff (including authorized volunteers)

J. Inappropriate dress, including but not limited to clothing that is sexually suggestive, indecent, or otherwise disruptive to the operations or goals of 4-H. Examples include clothing with negative or hateful language or symbols; see-through blouses, skirts or pants; sagging pants; exposed undergarments; bare midriff shirts; and excessively short or tight garments. Clothing should meet the standards expected in public schools. Specific clothing requirements may be required where appropriate for a particular event

K. Unruly behavior in hotels and public areas, particularly during overnight events. There should be no running in the halls, prank calls, unnecessary noise, excessively late hours, or visiting in rooms of the opposite sex

III. Disciplinary Procedures:

A. Discipline may be imposed by any 4-H staff or Cooperative Extension Service employee who has oversight responsibility for 4-H activities.

B. Unless immediate action is required, the following procedures must take place before there can be any finding or conclusion of guilt:

1) the accused participant shall be told the charge (which of the prohibited behaviors listed above he or she is accused of violating), and
2) the accused participant is told what factual evidence supports the charge, and
3) the accused participant has been given a chance to tell his/her side of the story.

C. The 4-H staff person must be satisfied that the participant more likely than not engaged in the prohibited behavior before imposing a sanction.

D. Sanctions may include some or all of the following:
1) Verbal warning
2) Notification to parents
3) Immediate removal from the activity
4) Being placed on a behavior contract
5) Referral to local law enforcement and/or juvenile court
6) Program suspension and/or
7) Expulsion from program
8) Other sanctions appropriate to the circumstances, as determined by 4-H.

E. Appeals

1) Disciplinary action for local or county-level events may be appealed to the County Director and or 4-H Agent. All appeals must in writing and must be received by the County Director and or 4-H Agent within 30 days of the disciplinary action. The County Director and or 4-H Agent or designee shall review the appeal statement, any written response from the decision maker, and may review other relevant information. The County Director and or 4-H Agent shall send a written decision to the appellant, the 4-H staff member who made the initial decision, and Head of the Department of 4-H Youth Development. The County Director and or 4-H Agent's appeal decision shall constitute the final agency action unless the Department Head chooses to exercise further review.

2) Disciplinary action for regional or state-level events may be appealed to the Head of the Department of 4-H Youth Development, Cooperative Extension Service, Box 7606, NC State University, Raleigh NC 27695-7606; telephone (919) 515-3242. All appeals must in writing and must be received by the Department within 30 days of the disciplinary action. The Department Head or designee shall review the appeal statement, any written response from the decision maker, and may review other relevant information. The Department Head shall send a written decision to the appellant and the 4-H staff member who made the initial decision, and the Department Head's appeal decision shall constitute the final agency action.

F. Immediate action situations:

4-H or Extension staff may take immediate action to remove a participant from an activity and other action as needed, where there is an emergency situation or significant risk of continuing misconduct. In those cases, the immediate action is temporary discipline and the 4-H or Extension staff must arrange for the procedures in parts B, C, D, and E above as soon as possible but in no event longer than seven days from the temporary discipline.

4-H Member's Name *(print)*: _____ Date: _____

4-H Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____

4-H Parent's / Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____