

# Volunteer Agreement

## **I. General Information**

The mission of Montana 4-H is to educate youth and adults for living in a global and ever-changing world by using the resources of Land-Grant Universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It strives to create environments in which young people are valued, contributing members of their community. Volunteers are one key to fulfilling this mission.

## **II. Standards of Behavior**

These standards outline Montana 4-H Youth Program expectations of all those who work with youth. It represents a code of ethics which all volunteers must observe. 1. Work cooperatively with youth, families, volunteers, Montana State Extension Service faculty and staff and others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behaviors appropriate for a positive role model for youth. 2. Make all reasonable effort to ensure equal access to participation for all youth and adults, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. 3. Provide a safe environment; do not harm youth or adults in any way, whether through sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect or other harmful experiences including divisive and slanderous statements through email and social media. 4. Do not use alcohol or illegal substances while working with or responsible for youth, nor allow youth under supervision to do so. 5. Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation. 6. Strive to be a positive role model. By example, help individuals learn to respect and cooperate with others. Teach others to compete with honesty and fair play. 7. Notify Extension staff promptly of any incident that may violate MSU Extension policies. 8. Inform County 4-H Staff of any personal arrests or charges of criminal activity. 9. Accept supervision and support from County 4-H Staff while involved in the Montana 4-H program.

## **III. Child Abuse and Neglect Guidelines**

As a volunteer of a youth serving organization, it is extremely important to be aware of your responsibility for child safety. Even though you are not required by law as a 4-H volunteer to report child abuse, it is important to insure that youth are in a safe environment and to report anything that is a risk to a child's welfare or suspected abuse. Child Abuse is the injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, emotional abuse or maltreatment of a child. Different types of abuse include:

- **Physical Abuse**: Intentional physical injury to a child.
- **Sexual Abuse**: An act of sexual nature performed to gratify sexual desire.
- **Neglect**: An act or omission that constitutes a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare and/or safety.
- **Emotional Abuse**: Verbal or nonverbal violence towards a child on a consistent basis.

It is not the responsibility of a 4-H volunteer to determine whether or not a child is abused. This is the responsibility of Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. However, it is the responsibility of a 4-H volunteer to report suspected abuse to Extension faculty or staff or the proper authorities. The following is a list of common signs of abuse. This list is not exhaustive nor is the presence of one or more indicators proof that abuse is taking place.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts or burns particularly if on a part of the body that is not prone to such injuries.

- An injury for which explanation is inconsistent.
- Unexplained changes in behavior such as becoming withdrawn, destructive habits, constant fatigue, depression, etc.
- Sexual awareness inappropriate for an age.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Long-term abuse has been shown to have lasting effect on youth into adulthood physically and/or emotionally. As a 4-H volunteer, you have the opportunity to build trusting relationships with youth and make a positive difference in their lives. If you have further questions, regarding how or when to report suspected child abuse, contact your County Extension Office.

#### **IV. Volunteer Agreement**

VOLUNTEER AGREES TO:

*Volunteers are asked to carefully consider the following expectations.*

- Enroll as a volunteer.
- Support and abide by the Montana 4-H Volunteer Standards of Behavior and Child Abuse & Neglect Guidelines.
- Be supportive of 4-H programs, youth, other adults and staff members.
- Participate in meetings and volunteer trainings as appropriate to duties.
- Provide a safe, positive environment for youth and adults to grow, learn and develop.
- Inform youth and adults of events, activities and program opportunities.

MSU EXTENSION AGREES TO:

*Volunteers accepted and agreeing to serve can expect the following from MSU Extension.*

- Orient volunteers to the 4-H mission, program expectations and expectations of the position.
- Provide overall direction for the 4-H program.
- Provide assistance, support and encouragement.
- Provide educational programs and materials to develop volunteer's understanding and competency to fulfill assignments.
- Provide instructional materials and resources to be used in educational programs.
- Inform volunteers of events, activities and program opportunities.

#### **V. Signature and Authorization**

I authorize MSU Extension to conduct checks of my Personal Background. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of information requested is just cause for non-appointment or removal as a 4-H volunteer. I also understand that this information will be reviewed by 4-H personnel in order to make decisions regarding my 4-H volunteer capacity.

Signature





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