Procedures for Dismissal of a Volunteer

Before any official action is taken, county professional staff and their immediate Extension supervisors should counsel volunteers about problems. Written records of discussion concerning volunteer performance should be maintained. The following steps should be utilized for a volunteer’s removal only after efforts have been made to help the volunteer improve his or her performance.

**Step 1:** County Extension staff representative meets with the volunteer to discuss problems with performance and/or any 4-H Rules and Guidelines violations. Specific areas for improvement are outlined and recorded. A written record of the meeting is kept and provided to all participants, including immediate Extension supervisors. The volunteer should also sign a copy of the notes from the meeting as an acknowledgement of his/her attendance and participation in the meeting and the expectations outlined.

**Step 2:** If problems continue, a second meeting may be held with the volunteer and County Extension Staff. The volunteer is given a probationary period during which performance must improve. If problems continue, the volunteer should be removed from service. Again, written records should be kept and provided as in Step 1. Prior to removing a volunteer from service, County Extension staff should contact their immediate supervisor or other appropriate personnel, for counsel.

**Step 3:** If removed, the volunteer must be notified in writing of their removal from service to 4-H. Copies provided as noted in Steps 1 & 2.

**Step 4:** If the volunteer wishes to appeal the decision, a written request for review must be submitted to the County Extension Agent, who will then forward to the appropriate District Extension Administrator. The review is completed by a committee designated by the District Extension Administrator or County Extension Director with input from the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Director. A written reply will be provided to the volunteer on the results of the review and the final decision on the appeal. Records are provided as noted in Step 1.

**Immediate Removal of a Volunteer**

Some actions by volunteers may warrant immediate removal or suspension without benefit of the step-by-step process. Extension reserves the right to impose, on a case-by-case basis, immediate removal or suspension for any infraction deemed by Extension to warrant such severe action. Such conduct might include, but is not limited to; conduct causing substantial disruption to 4-H programs or activities, conduct evidencing reckless disregard of the safety of people or property, or negligence or grossly negligence conduct, criminal arrest, or convictions. In some cases a volunteer may be suspended until an investigation is completed. A decision for immediate removal must be made with input from the appropriate Extension supervisor and Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Director.

Any adult may be required to immediately leave any 4-H function for using abusive language, threatening any individual, becoming violent, causing or threatening bodily harm to any minor (including their own child) or adult, or exhibiting signs of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

**Role of 4-H Parent/Guardian**

4-H is a youth development program that depends on and encourages the involvement of parents and other significant adults in supporting ongoing educational programs. Parents/Guardians help members set and accomplish goals and serve as a communication link between their children, the Extension staff and 4-H volunteers.

Procedure for Dismissal of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians who become disruptive at a 4-H program may be barred from all 4-H functions. While the following process should be used to begin dismissal proceedings, Extension reserves the right to immediately remove parents from the 4-H program under other provisions contained in the rules and guidelines.

**Step 1:** County Extension staff, club managers and/or project leaders should counsel with the individual regarding the disruption and discuss alternatives. Such parents need to be advised of ways to address their complaints through a written complaint letter submitted to the county Extension agent. Written records of this discussion should be kept and the county Extension staff should receive a copy of such records.

**Step 2:** If the problem persists, county Extension staff should meet with the parent and review the expected behavior change and outline the specific behaviors which will not be accepted. The parent should sign and receive a copy of the notes from the meeting as an acknowledgment of his/her attendance and participation in the conference and the behavioral expectations while participating in 4-H events. Copies of this letter should go to all persons involved in the conference and to the District Extension Administrator. Parents who have concerns which cannot be resolved at the county level may contact the appropriate District Extension Administrator or Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Director.
Step 3: If the problem persists, the county Extension staff, in concurrence with the District Extension Administrator, County Extension Director (if applicable) and Texas 4-H Youth Development Program Director, may write a letter to the parent indicating that he or she will no longer be allowed to attend any 4-H function sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Such a letter should be sent in a manner that the county Extension staff is assured the individual did receive the letter.

Step 4: Should the individual try to attend any event, the person in charge of that event should ask them to leave. If they fail to do so, the local law enforcement should be contacted and asked to remove that individual from the premises. Extension personnel or non-law enforcement volunteer should not attempt to physically remove the parent.

A child who has a parent who has been dismissed from any 4-H function is still eligible to participate in 4-H.