



# Hillsborough



## County 4-H

# Policies and Procedures Handbook

Revised July 2016

\*Policy updates highlighted\*

**UF** | **IFAS Extension**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



**4-H Youth Development**

## **System**

Your 4-H club is part of a much larger system. The system offers support from many levels for the things that your club will plan to do in the coming year. There are many 4-H clubs in Hillsborough County and in Florida. 4-H is found in every state in the United States and in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Similar clubs have been found in more than 80 countries around the world.

## **A Partnership**

4-H is the youth development program of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. It is a partnership between the Hillsborough County Government, the University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences (IFAS), Florida A&M University, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National 4-H Council.

## **Mission**

Florida 4-H creates supportive environments for diverse youth and adults to reach their fullest potential.

## **Vision**

Florida 4-H aspires to be the leading youth development program that creates positive change in youth, families, and communities.

## **Pledge**

I Pledge my Head to Clearer Thinking,  
My Heart to Greater Loyalty,  
My Hands to Larger Service, and  
My Health for Better Living;  
For My Club, My Community, My Country, and My World.

## **Colors**

Green and White

## **Motto**

“To Make the Best Better”

## **Slogan**

“Learn By Doing”

## **Emblem**

The official emblem, a green four-leafed clover with a white “H” on each clover leaf, is copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H.



## 4-H Name and Emblem

The 4-H name and emblem are held in trust by the Secretary of Agriculture for the United States Department of Agriculture for the educational and character building purposes of the 4-H program.

1. The 4-H name and emblem may be used by authorized representatives for the educational needs and interests of youth enrolled in 4-H.
2. Any use of the 4-H name and emblem is forbidden if it exploits the 4-H programs, its volunteer leaders, youth participants, the United States Department of Agriculture, Land Grant Colleges, Cooperative Extension Service, or their employees.
3. It is not permissible to superimpose any letter, design, or object on the 4-H emblem, or to materially alter its intended shape.
4. Advertisements, news releases, publications in any form, visuals and audio visuals, or displays in any form must not include actual or implied testimonials or endorsements of business firms, commercial products or services. Statements that a product is used or preferred to the exclusion of similar products are not permitted.

***\*Members without enrollment forms on file are not considered official 4-H members and cannot use the 4-H name or emblem in any manner.*** This applies to individuals entering competitions such as fairs, contests, etc.

***\*Clubs without annual charter forms on file are not considered official 4-H clubs and cannot use the 4-H name or emblem in any manner.*** This applies to clubs entering competitions such as fairs, contests, etc.

***\*4-H volunteers without an annual appointment letter from Hillsborough County 4-H are not considered official 4-H volunteers and cannot use the 4-H name or emblem in any manner.***

Any unauthorized individual or group using the 4-H name or emblem is in violation of Public Law 772, Chapter 645-2d (H.R. 3190), Title 18 U.S.C. 707 and is subject to fines not more than \$250.00 or imprisonment not more than six months, or both.



## 4-H Year

The official 4-H year is September 1 to August 31.



### “Senior” Participants

In Florida, Senior category begins at age 14, as of September 1 of the current 4-H year, and the 4-H members must not have passed his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or graduated high school (whichever comes first).

### “Intermediate” Participants

Intermediate members are youth ages 11-13 as of September 1 of the current 4-H year. This age category was added as of the 2006-2007 4-H year.

### “Junior” Participants

Junior refers to youth ages 8-10 years old as of September 1 of the current 4-H year.

### 4-H Uniform

There is no official 4-H uniform. No uniform is required for any 4-H event or activity. Many 4-Hers like to and are encouraged to wear the 4-H colors of green and white during 4-H events and activities. As part of any County, District, or State 4-H event, however, proper conduct and dress by 4-H participants is important. For these events, dress codes are published and distributed with registration packets. **Note:** *County/state fairs and events hosted by organizations other than 4-H may require a specified dress code.*

### 4-H Membership

To be a bona fide member of Hillsborough County 4-H, it is essential the 4-H office receives notification that a completed enrollment form and participation form for each member has been completed through florida.4honline.com for the current 4-H year. In addition, members are to pay a \$20.00 annual membership fee\* for Community Club Members 4-H ages 8-18. Half of this fee will be managed and used by your local 4-H program and the remainder will be used to invest in collective needs. Specifically, the Florida 4-H Youth Development Program will use these funds to improve, update, and modernize state-level events, activities, and competitions for 4-H youth. Member insurance will also be paid for by the state instead of individual county programs to alleviate this local burden. We will implement transportation solutions for state and regional events and provide more support for your local agent and programs. Families who have more than three 4-Hers have a maximum fee of \$60.00 per year for all of their children. If a membership fee is a barrier for any youth to join 4-H, please contact your local county 4-H Agent. Florida 4-H will never exclude a youth from 4-H for inability to pay and work to find solutions as needed. Youth will not be considered a 4-H member until this payment is made and will not be allowed to participate in any 4-H event.

***4-Hers wishing to enter county or state fairs and district or state level competition need to be enrolled prior to December 1 of the current 4-H year (by October 1 for the Hillsborough County Fair).***

#### **4-H Membership Continued**

1. To be a bona fide 4-H member, the individual must reach his or her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday by September 1 of the current 4-H year. Youth may continue to participate until August 31 of the 4-H year in which they reach their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.
2. To be a bona fide 4-H member, the individual is expected to attend at least 50% of their club's meetings (at the discretion of the 4-H Club Leader), participate in at least one community service project, and submit at least one completed 4-H record book for Hillsborough County 4-H record book judging (usually books are submitted by August 1 of the current 4-H year). Participation in County Events is highly encouraged.

#### **Complete 4-H Record books consist of:**

- a. Complete 4-H Project Book(s) (ex: dog, horse, dairy, robotics, sewing, public speaking, President, etc.)
  - b. Complete Summary Level Book (based on age: Cloverbud, Junior, Intermediate, Senior)
  - c. 4-H Overall Story (summarize overall 4-H experience)
  - d. 4-H photos
3. All members are expected to abide by the established Code of Conduct.
  4. New 4-H clubs may be organized at any time during the year (*Refer to "Active 4-H Clubs" for specific information*). Only 4-H clubs recognized by the Hillsborough County 4-H office are considered official 4-H clubs. Participation by members of these new clubs in county-wide 4-H functions will be governed by the rules for that particular function.
  5. Five to 7 year olds are 4-H members with no special name (such as Pee Wee or Cloverbuds) being used statewide. Hillsborough County 4-H uses the term "Cloverbud" when referring to 4-H members of this age. Enrolled 5-7 year olds are covered by insurance policies currently available to all 4-H participants. Participants cannot be enrolled in any large animal projects (*Refer to "Project/Program Participation for 5-7 year old"*).
  6. New members may enroll at any time during the 4-H year. New members will be held to the December 1 date to participate in fairs/competitions.
  7. 4-Hers may join and be club officers for more than one club; however, a 4-Her may serve as club President or County Youth Leadership Board Delegate for only one club. 4-Hers who are enrolled in more than one club need to include each club name and project on their florida.4honline.com enrollment.
  8. Membership in 4-H cannot be prohibited on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, creed, economic status, or geographic location within Hillsborough County.
  9. All 4-H club rules affecting membership eligibility need to be approved by the 4-H office of Hillsborough County. The club leader may limit size of the club. A waiting list for membership must be established. As openings come available, new members may be enrolled based on the waiting list. Any club rule for determining active club membership must have provisions made for excused absences, privileges lost by inactive members, and a means of reinstatement to active membership. Inactive members do not lose 4-H membership, only club membership; however they may not earn credit for completing the 4-H year and may not be considered bona fide 4-H members for event eligibility.

10. Volunteers and members need to reside in Hillsborough County unless approved in writing by the 4-H Agent in both counties. Members and leaders may participate in only one county in 4-H and 4-H related functions. Members can participate only in the county fair of the county in which they are registered as 4-H, but may participate in "Open Youth" in other counties if they wish.
11. Hillsborough County does not recognize independent membership.

#### **4-H Projects**

1. A member may enroll in as many projects as desired, with the understanding that all projects may not be covered in a 4-H program. A project consists of a minimum of 6 hours of educational programming on that topic. A member should have a project book for each project completed included in their end of the year 4-H Record Book.
2. Members cannot be required to own specific resources (such as a horse, steer, or sewing machine) to belong to a club.
3. If leasing an animal or equipment, a lease agreement needs to be on file in the 4-H Office by **December 1** of the current 4-H year.
4. It is recommended that a new 4-Her limit the number of projects taken.
5. 4-H project information will only be distributed to 4-H members and clubs in Hillsborough County with enrollment records on file with the 4-H office.

#### **Active 4-H Clubs**

Below are elements found in successful 4-H clubs. All clubs are highly encouraged to fulfill the expectations below for the betterment of the overall Hillsborough County 4-H Program.

1. **Active clubs need to have leader and member enrollment and Affirmative Action forms on file in the Hillsborough County 4-H office for the current 4-H year (by December 1).** Members without enrollment through [florida.4honline.com](http://florida.4honline.com) and who have not paid member insurance are not considered official 4-H members. Clubs who do not have annual charter forms on file are not considered official 4-H clubs. This applies to individuals or clubs entering competitions such as fairs, contests, etc. **Charter forms are due to 4-H office by October 1.** Any unauthorized individual or group using the 4-H name or emblem is in violation of Public Law 772, Chapter 645-2d (H.R. 3190), Title 18 U.S.C. 707 and is subject to fines not more than \$250.00 or imprisonment not more than six months, or both.
2. The organizational leader of the 4-H club are expected to complete designated leader training series developed by the Hillsborough County 4-H Agents prior to establishing/renewing the 4-H club each year. The 4-H club will not be recognized as an official active 4-H club of Hillsborough County until the leader completes this training and has been successfully screened, interviewed, and receives an annual appointment letter. Organizational leaders are expected to communicate with the 4-H office to ensure all club volunteers complete the screening and training requirements prior to receiving an annual appointment letter and volunteering.
3. Clubs are expected to hold at least seven one-hour meetings per 4-H year to be considered active. The seven meetings need to be composed of three parts: business meeting, educational component, and recreation.

4. Active 4-H clubs are expected to complete at least one county wide community service project per year. Additional community service projects are encouraged.
5. The 4-H organizational leader is responsible for reporting volunteer hours donated to the Hillsborough County 4-H office on a monthly basis.
6. Active 4-H clubs are expected to submit at minimum the Club Standards of Excellence (15 of 20 completed), 4-H Secretary Record book, and 4-H Treasurer Record book at the completion of the 4-H year (usually August 1).
7. Active 4-H clubs have two voting delegates on the Hillsborough County Youth Leader Board. Active 4-H clubs are expected to have representation at Youth Leader Board meetings and events.
8. Active 4-H clubs are expected to participate in County Events Day. County Events provides 4-H members the opportunity to participate in a variety of competitive events as part of the 4-H curriculum designed to allow youth to:
  - Gain experience and develop techniques in preparing and presenting educational information
  - Enhance decision-making ability
  - Make public presentations
  - Develop good sportsmanship
  - Develop self-esteem.

#### **Participation Age Consideration for 5-7 Year Old Youth**

1. Age and developmentally appropriate curricula are being produced or secured and made available for county programs so the specific needs and abilities of 5-7 year olds can be successfully met. Not all 4-H curricula areas are deemed appropriate for this range of ages due to developmental appropriateness, safety, or insurance considerations as outlined below.
2. Learning in a group setting is the primary method for involving 5-7 year olds in 4-H. Individualized projects are not appropriate methods for most 5-7 year olds due to limited reading and other self-management skills.
3. Dual participation of child and parent or guardian is encouraged. Family activities are incorporated in curricula to encourage parent/child participation and to build a family involvement pattern that will be maintained as children become older.

#### **Project/Program Participation for 5-7 Year Old Youth**

1. Animal projects for 5-7 year olds will be limited to “lap” animals only. Therefore companion rather than production animals will be the focus of 4-H animal experiences for this age group.
  - a. 5-7 year olds are ineligible to enroll in any large animal projects (sheep, goat, swine, beef, dairy, llama, ostrich, or horse) or participate in any livestock or horse shows. A 4-Her must be 8 years of age at the beginning of the current 4-H year (September 1) to be eligible to enroll in a large animal 4-H project. Current insurance policies available to 4-H participants do not include coverage for children under 8 years of age if enrolled in large animal 4-H projects.
  - b. This policy does not prohibit 5-7 year olds from learning about large animals through attendance at meetings or through field trips. They cannot participate, however, in 4-H activities that bring them in contact with large animals due to safety and insurance coverage considerations.

Note: Families (parents or guardians) assume all risk and responsibility of young children if assisting 4-H siblings with large animals.

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2. Motorized vehicle and shooting sport 4-H programs will not permit the participation of 5-7 year olds. Again, safety and insurance coverage considerations are the reasons for this program limitation.
3. Summer residential camping programs operated in cooperation with the State 4-H Department and other programs are not designed to address the unique developmental and supervisory needs of 5-7 year olds. Therefore, 5-7 year olds are not eligible to participate in these residential camping programs. Family camps, especially designed to include 5-7 year olds. Are encouraged.
4. 4-H activities will be offered to encourage 5-7 year olds to exhibit and share project activities at the participation level or for feedback against a pre-defined standard. This method encourages and supports success among younger children who in most cases are not yet emotionally ready to experience failure. Therefore, children under 8 year of age are ineligible to participate in competitive activities at any level (club, county, district, state, nationals, or international).

### **Agent, Program Assistant, and Volunteer Staff Development**

Program guidelines, curricula, and information about age appropriate learning methods are available to support county program planning groups as well as local volunteers who may be directly involved with 5-7 year olds. University extension specialists can provide staff development programs for county and/or multi county groups upon request.

### **Laws**

4-H leaders, volunteers, parents, and members must obey the laws of the locality, state, and nation.

### **Adult Role Model**

Treat others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behaviors appropriate to be a positive role model.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect**

1. Recognize that verbal and/or physical abuse and/or neglect of youth is unacceptable in 4-H youth programs and report suspected abuse to authorities.
2. Do not participate in or condone neglect or abuse which happen to 4-H youth participants outside the program and report suspected abuse to authorities.

### **Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms, etc.**

The possession or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, and/or narcotics is strictly prohibited at all times at any 4-H programs, event, or activity.

Under state law, Section 790.115, Florida Statutes, the possession of firearms, destructive devices, other weapons and ammunition (for antique firearms, short-barreled shotguns, short-barreled rifles, automatic rifles, and other destructive devices) at any 4-H activity or event is prohibited. An exception is made under University of Florida Regulation 2.001, allowing firearms education classes to be conducted on properties designated for 4-H use provided the firearms are handled, used and stored in a safe and responsible manner and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations. The program coordinator or property manager shall have the right to prohibit or limit the use, handling or storage of firearms on properties designated for 4-H use in connection with approved firearms education programs for the safety of persons on the property.

### **Motor Vehicle Operation**



1. Any adult transporting 4-Hers need to be registered with the Hillsborough County 4-H office and have an annual appointment letter on file.
2. Operate motor vehicles including machines or equipment in a safe and reliable manner when working with 4-H youth, and only with a valid driver's license and the legally required insurance coverage.

### **Two-Deep Leadership**

**Effective September 1, 2015 – State 4-H has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies primarily protect youth members. However, they also serve to protect adult leaders/volunteers.**

**Two-deep leadership on all outings is required. A minimum of two authorized and screened adults are required for all trips and outings.**

A best practice is **NO** One-on-one contact between adults and youth members. In situations requiring one-on-one teaching, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.

### **4-H & Social Media Best Policies**

*"The primary purpose of 4-H social media is to cultivate an active community of current and future 4-Hers in a safe online environment. Through these channels we hope to foster engagement through three primary types of measurable activity: Participation, Advocacy and Contribution" – National 4-H Council*

**\*Florida 4-H reserves the right to remove content if deemed inappropriate due to inclusion of any of the following**

- Language, images or video that is determined to be profane, obscene, vulgar or lewd
- Derogatory or discriminatory language (including comments about sex, age, race, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation)
- Spam posted regarding the same content matter, links, video, or any other media
- Use of specific names of individuals, clubs or identifiable names with language that defames, abuses or threatens
- Any advertisement for products or services of solicitation of funds exceeding more than one post per week

### **Website and Social Media**

- Website content must be directly related to 4-H programs, clubs, projects, and activities. Commercial businesses, products, or resources cannot be promoted nor sold.
- When using photos of youth, leaders/agents must obtain a signed Photo Release Form.
- 4-H club members under the age of 19 must not have their photo, accompanied by their first and last names and county affiliation listed

### **Facebook Overview**

- **Profile**
  - A single person's persona of Facebook
  - Has "friends"
  - Personal
  - Clubs should NOT have profiles
- **Page**
  - An open environment used to engage a wider population about more general information
  - Has "Fans"
  - *Ex: Hillsborough County 4-H Page <https://www.facebook.com/hillsborough4hfl>*
  - If a club chooses to have a page, it must be open to all
  - Inform parents of the page and invite them to join the conversation
- **Group**
  - A closed environment used to engage a wider population about more general information

- Has invited members; do not have to be friends or fans
- *Ex: Club group or project area groups*
- Invite parents to join the group

### **Social Media Safety and Risk Management**

- **Never use Facebook or other Social Media as an outlet for frustration**
- **Invite your 4-H agents to be fans of your page or members of your group**
- “Friend” with caution
- Clubs should not have a profile and should not have “friends”
- Do not post or tag pictures of youth with their full name or location
- Do not list the location of your meeting place on your facebook page
- Post content with discernment
- Be cautious with the applications you add to any page you create
- If you create it, you have to update it
- Take advantage of Facebook as a networking tool
- Spend time learning about privacy settings
- Keep info section to a minimum
- Err on the side of caution when posting photos