



Cornell Cooperative Extension – 4-H Youth Development

Policy Prohibiting the Use of Alcohol and Drugs in the 4-H Program

October, 2022

Purpose

This document provides background and context for the reference in Section 3 of the 4-H Code of Conduct <https://nys4-h.org/4hpolicies> which states that alcohol and drug use are not allowed by 4-H youth, adult volunteers or 4-H staff during any event or activity connected to the Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H program. This includes the use of tobacco products and marijuana. This document is designed to support the implementation and enforcement of this section of the Code of Conduct at the County Extension Association level.

What is a 4-H Youth Development Program, Event or Activity?

For the purpose of this policy and the associated 4-H Code of Conduct, any program, event or activity that involves 4-H participants and is endorsed, organized, and/or supported by Cornell Cooperative Extension at the County, State or National level is considered a 4-H program, event or activity and is covered by the 4-H Code of Conduct and this policy.

How is Smoking Defined?

Smoking refers to inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying of any lighted or heated product. This includes tobacco as well as other smoking substances, including marijuana and vaping.

How is Tobacco Use Defined?

Tobacco use includes inhaling, smoking, chewing, dipping or any other way of consuming tobacco products.

What is Considered a Tobacco Product?

The term tobacco product refers to all forms of tobacco, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, hookahs, electronic cigarettes, and all forms of smokeless tobacco.

How is Marijuana Use Defined?

Marijuana use means consuming marijuana products in any form, and/or being under the influence of marijuana products while at a CCE 4-H event.

Can Alcohol be Served at CCE 4-H Events?

No, the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, and marijuana is prohibited at all 4-H programs, events, and activities.

Can 4-H members attend events that are not CCE 4-H events where alcohol is served and work with the organization as 4-H members?

At events where alcohol is served, there should be two 4-H adult volunteers assigned as chaperones of 4-H members, with a minimum of two adult volunteers for every eight 4-H members (1:4 ratio). Additionally, 4-H members should not handle or have any contact with alcohol. Specifically, 4-H members should not serve alcohol at these events.

Can alcohol be given as a prize in a silent auction or for door prizes at events where 4-H members are present?

Yes, however, 4-H members cannot accept an alcoholic item either as a door prize or silent auction item.

How should CCE Associations inform the public about our policies in this regard?

We recommend using the following wording to share expectations with the general public. "In support of positive youth development, this event is alcohol, drug, smoke and tobacco free" on posters, letters, and other announcements for your 4-H events.

Please contact the NYS 4-H Office at Cornell University nys4h@cornell.edu with questions or concerns about this document. The content of this document was adapted in large part from a document developed by the University of California 4-H Youth Development Program.