

# Working with Minors

Oklahoma 4 H Volunteer Development Series



## *Minors Participating in OSU Related Activities and Programs*

### Learn More....

4H.VOL113  
Risk Management

4H.VOL.116  
Understanding Behavior

4H.VOL.102  
Understanding Boys and Girls

4H.VOL114  
4-H Youth Development

On March 1, 2013 the OSU A&M Board of Regents approved policy 1-0135 regarding minors participating in OSU related activities and programs. A copy of the complete OSU policy can be downloaded at <http://4h.okstate.edu/events-and-activities/forms>

The policy's purpose is to address the university community's obligations to protecting youth who participate in activities and programs on university property, in university facilities, or under the authority and direction of the university at other locations, including branch campuses, 4-H club meetings, schools, county extension offices, fairgrounds, etc.

Any 4-H sanctioned activity or event is considered an "extension" of the university campus., at any level - club, county, district and state.

Some portions of the policy are more directed as general best practices and should always be given due consideration.

This policy does not apply to general public events where parents or guardians are expected to provide supervision of Minors.

Annually all 4-H staff (paid and volunteer - teens and adults) must review/renew the Working with Minors (WWM) and Title VII and IX trainings. Training must be documented in the individual's personnel file.

**By Oklahoma Law a minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18.**



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## Appropriate Behavior with Minors

It is our responsibility to interact with youth in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner.

It is the expectation of the University that **one-on-one contact outside of the presence of others is not advised**, appropriate adult supervision is critical to the success of all of 4-H programs. Supervision should be provided in open, well lit environments, preferably with doors that do not lock on the inside only.

If at anytime an exception may be needed, visit with your immediate supervisor - extension educator, CED, etc.

In 4-H there should be an appropriate **“volunteer to youth ratio”** based upon the developmental level and needs of youth, the setting and the project(s). The ratio supports positive risk management and more importantly provides youth with positive relationships with caring adults.

When using any social media be sure that all content is appropriate. Although the policy does not address the use of social media with youth,

the 4-H program strongly discourages the use of one-on-one communication with youth through social media or any electronic means. Parent consent is provided as one of the “authorization” in the annual enrollment process. Respect the authorization.

When **transporting minors** more than one adult from the program must be present in the vehicle or multiple minors must be in the vehicle. It is not advised to be alone in a car with a minor, who is not your child.

While it is not against Oklahoma law, it is against OSU policy to transport people in the bed of pick up. The exception might be a trailer or pick up used in a parade where extreme caution should be used!

When youth are driving others, consider the Oklahoma Graduated Driving Laws. A prudent practice would be that youth not drive other youth without written

permission (see best practices WWM form 3) of a parent/guardian.

The Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Behavioral Guidelines must be read and signed annually. A breach of the guidelines can be grounds for terminating your relationship as a volunteer with the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development program.

As a reminder, number 7 in the behavior guidelines **prohibits the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs** when

responsible for or in the presence of a Minor.

It is also important that volunteers and educators follow all state laws and posted signage regarding firearms. We respect Oklahoma state law, but we also remind you that we have been entrusted the care of someone's child and we want to avoid any unforeseen circumstance where a firearm could injure a child.



Age	Ratio
<b>Cloverbuds</b> 5-7 year olds	<b>One Adult to 6 youth</b>
<b>8-14</b> year olds	<b>One Adult to 8 youth</b>
<b>15-17</b> year olds	<b>One Adult per 10 youth</b>

## Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Because of the relationships established in 4-H you may become aware of a youth’s personal circumstances. Oklahoma law makes the reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect *mandatory* for **all individuals** who may become aware of such behavior.

**Neither Oklahoma law nor any university policy allows you to delegate the duty to report child abuse or neglect.**

If you know or suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, you must act. Proof is not required. Any uncertainty in deciding to report should be resolved in favor of making a report.

When contacting local law enforcement you include all available information regarding the known or suspected abuse/neglect, including, but not limited to, the name of the child, his/her whereabouts, the names and addresses of the parents/guardian, caretaker and the character

and extent of the injuries.

The report should also contain, if known, any evidence of previous injuries to said child and any other pertinent information that might establish the cause of such injury or injuries, and the identity of the person or persons responsible for the same.

Do not delay making a report in order to gather evidence; law enforcement will determine whether such an investigation is warranted. It is better to report without all relevant information than to delay a report to collect information.

Do not directly question or solicit information from the child or from the person suspected of improper behavior. That is not your role; the role of investigation lies with city, county, and state officials not with you.

Protocol for reporting:

1. Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-

800-522-3511.

2. Report to local law enforcement authorities - city police or county sheriff’s office. If a child is in imminent danger, contact police /sheriff and then call OKDHS.
3. OSU Police Department 405-744-6523.
4. County Extension Office

As per Oklahoma law, any person who knowingly fails to make the report shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more

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**Under Oklahoma law you are required to report child abuse or neglect.**

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
<b>OKDHS</b>	<b>800-522-3511</b>
<b>OSU Police</b>	<b>405-744-6523 or 311</b>
<b>EthicsPoint</b>	<b>866-294-8692 or <a href="http://www.osu.ethicspoint.com">www.osu.ethicspoint.com</a></b>
<b>OSU Director of Human Resources</b>	<b>(405) 744-7420.</b>

**Awareness and good practices strengthen our positive youth development efforts.**

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than six months' imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00

**Any university personnel or volunteer who willfully fails to report a case of suspected child abuse is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal.**

Any university personnel or volunteer who makes

a good faith report of child abuse may not be subjected to retaliation in employment with the university.

Any 4-H volunteer, parent, teen, youth or employee who becomes aware of a failure to comply with this policy shall report such failure immediately to

- Director of Human Resources

(405) 744-7420 or

- EthicsPoint at [www.osu.ethicspoint.com](http://www.osu.ethicspoint.com) or by calling the toll-free number, 1-866-294-8692.



### Working with Minor Forms

There are seven forms to assist Oklahoma 4-H in managing our compliance with University policy 1-0135.

4-H Volunteers and Staff will use these forms when youth or adults are participating in any sanctioned/recognized 4-H activity or event.

Forms 1-3 are for use with Youth. Forms 4-6 are for use with Adults. Forms 7-9 are related to risk management

**Youth Forms**  
Form 1—Youth Participation and

Prescription Medications

~~Form 2~~—2017 integrated into form1.

Form 3—Travel & Transportation Consent

**Adult Forms**  
Form 4—Adult Medical

Form 5—Adult Volunteer—Risk and Release of Claims and Publicity Release use with non-certified 4-H volunteers.

~~Form 6~~—2017 integrated into annual enrollment

**Risk Management Forms**

Form 7—Activity and Event Intent

Form 8—Incident and Accident

Form 9—4-H Crisis Management Plan *(county use only)*

Carefully familiarize yourself with the content of each document and any instructions contained within the document.

## Position Description

Position descriptions are used for both certified and episodic volunteers. Position descriptions assist in communicating the expected scope and depth of responsibility and prepare the volunteer to assume and carry out their role. Position descriptions and a template for club and county roles are posted online at <http://4h.okstate.edu/for-educators/volunteer-management-system>.

As provided by the Oklahoma Governmental Tort Claims Act, volunteers and paid staff are protected under the Act equally, when they are working within the realm and scope of their employment. The easiest way to determine what a person's scope of employment is to operate with a position description that is inclusive enough to cover their major duties, yet not so exclusive that there is not freedom to do normal tasks related to the duty.

Another way to define a person's scope is through a written letter/ email of invitation or a contract. When asking someone to come and conduct a workshop, present a program, or judge an event be sure to follow-up the verbal conversation with a written document defining the date, time, location and other specific details such as what they are expected to do. This type of documentation defines the scope for which a person is employed (even if they are doing the task without compensation) as required by the Oklahoma Governmental Tort Claims Act.

Effective 2015, the University wants volunteers (certified and episodic) to complete a liability waiver when in the act of volunteering for our program.

A best management practice is to use the liability waiver (form 5) accompanied by a position description

when there is a 4-H activity or event sponsored by Extension/4-H using episodic volunteers.

All certified 4-H volunteers receive a position descriptions as part of the annual enrollment process. Club and Cloverbud leaders must annually sign their position description. The descriptions provided with enrollment cover the bulk of the certified volunteer efforts but may not cover volunteering for a "specific duty," i.e. helping with Share the Fun which is not part of the job of a club leader, project leader, etc.

At the local level, if a volunteer is following the good management practice of completing and filing form 7, the Activity and Intent Form, they are probably prepared and communicating expectation to parents and volunteers. If the activity has an above average level of risk it would be prudent for

the 4-H leader to have *non-certified* parents/ chaperones/other volunteers complete the liability waiver (form 5) and file them along with form 7.

Club leaders, project leaders, activity leaders, Extension educators, etc. are responsible for understanding the policy and to the best of their abilities to follow the expectations of Oklahoma State University.

### Writing a Position Description

A position description does not need a lot of detail, but it should include enough information that it reflects the general duties and responsibilities. A good practice and professional way of doing business is to send a timely email/ letter and/or orientation in advance. It shows the 4-H program is organized and respects the valuable time and services being shared. Secondly it is a good risk

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management practice because it provides 4-H, Extension and the University a level of protection.

In a simple position description, the volunteer is thanked for volunteering their service. The individual is provided the date, time and location of the event. In the following example, a generic email/letter has been

prepared. The volunteer(s) is/are being informed they will be assisting with one or more of the following activities:

Judge – Working with an appointed assistant you will be evaluating presentations and providing constructive comments which will aid in the 4-H'ers growth. General comments will be made to the room and individual comments will be

written on the score sheet.

Judges Assistant – introducing participants, timekeeping, recording results, assisting the judge

Door Keeper – monitoring the flow of traffic in and out of rooms during the contest

Registration – check-in, informing judges or cancellations or changes, and other general needs to keep

the contest moving smoothly

Refreshments – set-up, maintain and clean-up of the refreshment area

In the correspondence, the episodic volunteer is asked to complete and return the attached Form 5 – by email or the day of the event.

April 3, 2018

Dear Isobel,

Thank you for volunteering to assist with the Green County Speech contest on May 1, 2018. The contest will be held at the Church of Christ, 451 East Alameda Street in Norman, OK. The event begins at 7 pm but we ask that all volunteers arrive by 6:30 pm for a brief orientation and last minute instructions.

You will be assisting with one or more of the following activities:

Judge – Working with an appointed assistant you will be evaluating presentations and providing constructive comments which will aid in the 4-H'ers growth. General comments will be made to the room and individual comments will be written on the score sheet.

Judges Assistant – introducing participants, timekeeping, recording results, assisting the judge

Door Keeper – monitoring the flow of traffic in and out of rooms during the contest

Registration – check-in, informing judges or cancellations or changes, and other general needs to keep the contest moving smoothly

Refreshments – set-up and clean-up of the refreshment area

Please complete and sign the attached form. It can be returned by email to [knoepfli@4honline.com](mailto:knoepfli@4honline.com) or returned the day of the event.

On behalf of the participants, thank you for volunteering your time.

Karla Knoepfli  
Green County Volunteer  
444 County Line Road  
Norman, OK 73069  
405-321-4774

Attached: Form 5 Statement of Understanding