MSU Extension 4-H Exploration Days

Program Handbook

Participant Safety

The physical and emotional safety and well-being of the youth participants at 4-H Exploration Days are high priorities for Michigan 4-H Youth Development and Michigan State University. The 4-H Exploration Days conduct and safety policies and procedures meet or exceed the MSU requirements regarding all programs involving minors. More information about the MSU requirements for programs involving minors is available at <http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/youthprograms.htm>*.*

Additional information related to 4-H Exploration Days conduct expectations and safety is available at <http://4h.msue.msu.edu/events/4-h_exploration_days/responsibilities> and <http://4h.msue.msu.edu/events/4-h_exploration_days/faq>.

Participants attend 4-H Exploration Days as part of a county delegation. MSU Extension staff and 4-H volunteers carry out the following processes to ensure the safety and well-being of participants:

**Pre-Event County Orientation Meeting** – Each participant, along with a parent or guardian, must attend a pre-event county orientation meeting. At this meeting, you’ll get a preview of the event, request roommate pairings, meet your chaperones and find out what will be expected of you while you’re at MSU. Your local 4-H staff can provide you with the date, time and location of this important meeting.

**Youth and Chaperone Assignments –** All youth participants will be assigned to a specific adult chaperone. There must be at least one chaperone for every ten youth of the same gender.

**Whereabouts Schedules –** You and your assigned adult chaperone need to keep each other informed of where you’ll be, when and with whom. All chaperones will post two schedules on their residence hall room doors. One will show the chaperone’s schedule. The other will be for you to sign in and out of the recreational activities you attend without a chaperone.

**Youth and Chaperone Huddles –** In addition to the county meeting you’ll have shortly after arriving at 4-H Exploration Days, you’ll have five youth and chaperone huddles throughout the event. These mandatory meetings will give you a chance to touch base with your chaperone after sessions, before and after evening activities, before bedtime, and just before check-out and departure.

**Hosts –** Session and activity hosts will provide extra support and assistance throughout the event as needed. You can identify them by their green 4-H vests.

**Michigan 4-H Youth Code of Conduct & 4-H Exploration Days Rules**

The Michigan 4-H Youth Code of Conduct and Rules section of this handbook are included in the 4-H Exploration Days registration book along with a form that all event participants must sign to indicate they will abide by these expectations and all other university regulations in order to attend the program. (There is a slightly different version of the Code of Conduct for 4-H volunteers.)

If signed copies of your Michigan 4-H Code of Conduct, the Media Release and Medical Authorization Forms are already on file at your local MSU Extension office for this program year, you don’t need to complete another set. (Please be sure to update the information on file as needed, however.) If you haven’t submitted these forms to your local MSU Extension office yet, please do so. Your county 4-H staff will submit copies of these forms to the State 4-H Office after event registration ends.

Michigan 4-H Youth Code of Conduct

Participation in Michigan 4-H programs is subject to the observance of the program rules. Any participant who knowingly violates this code of conduct is subject to discipline, up to and including removal from the activity he or she is participating in (at his or her own expense) or the entire county 4-H program. Determination of disciplinary action shall be done with input from the volunteers and staff overseeing the program or activity. Final decisions about discipline will be made by the MSU Extension staff. Michigan 4-H members will:

* Show respect for, and cooperate with, fellow members, volunteers and staff.
* Follow 4-H policies and procedures when participating in any 4-H–sponsored event.
* Under no circumstances, commit or threaten violence toward any individual, group or the program.
* Under no circumstances, possess, sell or consume alcohol, tobacco, or any controlled substances at an MSU Extension 4-H youth activity or event.
* Under no circumstances, attend or participate in an MSU Extension 4-H youth activity or event under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances (including tobacco, electronic cigarettes, etc.).
* Under no circumstances, bring dangerous or unauthorized materials (such as fireworks, explosives, weapons or similar items) to an MSU Extension 4-H youth activity or event.
* Abstain from hazing, harassment or bullying of another participant, volunteer or staff member (either in face-to-face interactions, through social media or other communication venues), particularly when the behavior is based on a person’s appearance, race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status or other protected category under the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy.
* Not cheat or falsely represent efforts related to 4-H project activities.

4-H Exploration Days Event Rules

Participants at 4-H Exploration Days are expected to abide by the event-specific rules that follow.

General Rules

* Wear your name badge visibly at all times (except when swimming or sleeping).
* Actively participate in program sessions and a variety of afternoon and evening activities.
* Treat all areas of the facility and grounds with respect and pick up after yourself. Repair costs for damage incurred to property will be billed to those responsible. Theft and vandalism are strictly prohibited.
* Remember that you are responsible for your own belongings. Leave your valuables (such as expensive clothing and jewelry and electronic devices) at home. We recommend labeling your belongings with your name. If you lose anything, check with the Lost and Found station at each residence hall 4-H Information Center. 4-H Youth Development is not responsible for any lost or missing items. You will be charged a fee if you lose your room key or access card.
* Abstain from inappropriate sexual behavior including sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or intimate physical/sexual contact.
* Do not use cameras and other digital recording devices in locker rooms, restrooms, showers and other areas where privacy is expected.
* Do not leave the program grounds except for field trips arranged as part of the program under the supervision of event staff.
* Do not gamble for money or for any other items or behaviors.
* Refrain from yelling out of windows, removing window screens and leaning out of windows, or sitting on window ledges. Close your blinds when dressing and after dark.
* Refrain from running in residence halls and classroom hallways.
* Use of roller skates, in-line skates (such as Rollerblades) and scooters is restricted to sidewalks. Users of these devices may not use bike paths, parking ramps, buildings, gardens or any other posted area, or go on any roadway except while crossing a street within a crosswalk.
* Dress appropriately for the program schedule. Unacceptable attire includes clothing that:
	+ Exposes undergarments or excessively exposes the body (such as cropped, low-cut or extremely tight shirts, tube tops, short-shorts, excessively baggy or extreme low-rise pants).
	+ Conveys a violent, offensive, obscene message or image.
	+ Promotes use of an illegal substance.
* Wear shirts and shoes in eating areas. Wear swimsuits only for swimming and not as regular clothing. If wearing your swimsuit to and from the pool, cover it with an over garment or cover-up.

Contact Information & Emergency Procedures

Participant Cell Phones

If you bring a cell phone to this program, turn it off during meeting, class and session times so that you can participate fully and don’t disrupt the other participants. Please tell your family and friends to limit their calls and texts to you during the event so that you can make the most of your experience.

Emergency Contact Information

The telephone number for the 4-H Exploration Days General Headquarters is 517-353-2922. This number is listed at the bottom of the name badge each participant receives upon arrival. The Headquarters is staffed from 7 a.m. to midnight on Wednesday and Thursday and from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday. In the case of a night time emergency, contact the West Akers night staff at 517-353-3358. That person will put you in touch with the 4-H Exploration Days program director.

If an emergency arises at home, the program General Headquarters can be contacted and a message will be relayed to the participant. The participant can use a phone designated by the program staff to return the call.

If There’s a Medical Emergency During This Program

If you get sick or hurt during 4-H Exploration Days, you or someone with you should contact General Headquarters at 517-353-2922. Your parent or guardian will be contacted immediately using the contact information on your Medical Treatment Authorization form. Messages will be left seeking a return call if there is no answer, and the next number will be called.

Depending on the medical concern, your parent or guardian will be asked to determine whether and what level of treatment will be sought during the program or if they wish to delay medical treatment or advice until you return home.

An onsite Nurse’s Station will be staffed from 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday to 1 p.m. on Friday of the event in one of the residence halls being used for the event. This service is available to participants at no charge. If you need health care beyond what the nurse can provide, you will be taken to a Lansing-area health care facility. The cost of treatment will be billed to you or your parents or guardian.

If you have to leave 4-H Exploration Days early for health or family emergency reasons, your parent or guardian is expected to arrange for timely pick up and to incur any related expenses. During the time between when your parent or guardian is notified and he or she arrives with proper identification, you will be separated from program activities and remain under staff supervision.

Housing Policies & Regulations

The policies and regulations listed in this section cover curfews, visitors and housing assignments. The housing assignment policy conforms with the Michigan 4-H Youth Development Youth-Adult Overnight Housing Policy *(*[*http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/4h\_housing\_policy*](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/resources/4h_housing_policy)*).*

Curfew

You must be in your residence hall by 11 p.m., and in your assigned room by 11:15 p.m. Quiet time starts at midnight. CCAs will do room checks each night at 11:15 to ensure that you’re in your room. If you want to go to sleep before 11 p.m., let your chaperone know so that you can be checked in before the official room check time.

You must keep your assigned room once assignments have been made and keys and conference cards issued. Unapproved changes make it difficult to contact you in emergencies and at bed check time.

Visitors

**Event Participants of the Opposite Gender –** Housing areas are designated either “females only” or “males only.” Participants are not allowed in the opposite housing areas. The only exception is if your county’s meeting that is scheduled for shortly after check-in on Wednesday has to be held in a study lounge on a housing floor. If this applies to your county, a chaperone will gather participants of the opposite gender in the residence hall lobby and escort them to and from the housing floor study lounge.

**Guests Who Aren’t Event Participants –** You may not have visitors during 4-H Exploration Days who are not associated with the event.

Housing Assignments

Roommate assignments are made at the county level in early June, usually at the pre-event county orientation meeting. Let your county staff know if there’s a specific person from your county you’d like to room with. **(Note:** Requests to room with someone from another county cannot be honored. All participants – youth and adult – must be housed with the county delegation that submitted their registration and payment.)

Males and females are housed separately, and in general, youth participants will be housed with other youth participants and adult participants with other adult participants.

Any youth aged 18, 19 or 20 at the time of the event must not be housed with or share bathrooms with younger, unrelated youth unless he or she has completed a background check, which includes a reference check and a criminal history check. Local MSU Extension staff are responsible for ensuring that this background check is completed before the event.

An adult chaperone may share a room with unrelated youth participants only if at least two minors are assigned to the room. No child who is unrelated to an adult chaperone will share a room alone with an adult. Each chaperone will have been through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process and completed a background check before the event.

A parent or guardian should review and sign the Overnight Housing Permission Form (see section 3 of the Authorization Form). If the form is not signed, the youth participant will be assigned to a room only with other youth under age 18.

Consequences for Misbehavior

Youth Participants

If you misbehave seriously enough during 4-H Exploration Days that your parents or guardians need to be involved, they will be contacted either by you – while under the supervision of the event program staff – or directly by the program staff. Your parents or guardian will be informed of what has happened and what the follow-up action will be. The possible consequences include that you are:

* Given a second chance, with a clear understanding of the behavior expected from you.
* Dismissed immediately from the event at your parents or guardian’s expense.
* Prohibited from participating in other MSU programs.
* Turned over to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

If you are dismissed early from 4-H Exploration Days, your parent or guardian is expected to arrange for timely pick up and to incur any related expenses. During the time between when your parent or guardian is notified and he or she arrives on campus with proper identification, you will be separated from the program activities and remain under staff supervision. In extreme circumstances, you may be turned over to local authorities during the wait time before pick up occurs.

Adult Participants

Disciplinary action can range from a discussion and verbal warning to immediate dismissal from the event. If inappropriate behavior continues after behavior expectations have been reviewed with the adult participant and a warning has been issued, the adult will be asked to leave the event immediately at his or her own expense and arrangement. The offending adult may also be prohibited from being involved with other MSU programs. If a law violation is involved, the adult will be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

The program coordinator will work with other staff as needed to find a replacement for the offending adult in his or her role at the event (such an instructor or chaperone).