

CHARLEVOIX COUNTY 4-H

POLICIES & PROCEDURES 2026 - 2027

AGE:

The age the 4-H member is for the current year as of January 1 (4-H age) will be the age we consider for all 4-H activities. Members must be between the ages of 5 and 19 years of age (4-H age). Cloverbuds are 5-7 years old (4-H age). 4-H'ers with disabilities may continue as 4-H'ers regardless of their upper age with special permission from their county 4-H staff. (Note that Michigan law stipulates that a student with a disability is entitled to continue in a special education program of service until the end of the school year in which he or she reaches age 26.) Determination for developmental appropriateness rests with the 4-H staff member, supported by MSU Extension.

All exhibitors are subject to additional age requirements as determined by the Emmet-Charlevoix County Fair Advisory Council, and individual Charlevoix and Emmet 4-H Councils and Associations.

Individuals aged 18, 19, or 20 years old, (as of January 1 of the current program year) who are within the 4-H age eligibility may choose to apply as MSU Extension Gold or Silver level 4-H volunteers. However, if accepted, they forfeit their status as 4-H youth members for the remainder of their 4-H involvement. Leaders wanting to serve as chaperones must be 21 years old at the time of the event.

A Jr. Leader is a TEEN/Young Adult 4-H member volunteer.

Regional and State events/activities may have different age requirements for participation. It is the responsibility of the participant to be aware of and comply with those requirements.

RESIDENCY:

Members and leaders must be registered in a Charlevoix County Club(s) to be eligible for participation in any Charlevoix County 4-H events, regional and/or state events in which they will be representing Charlevoix County 4-H youth development.

Members may have residency in any county in the state of Michigan but will be encouraged to seek membership in clubs within their own counties before joining the Charlevoix County 4-H program. Members are encouraged to reside in close proximity of the county in which their club is registered by Dec 1st. This is to encourage participation in club and county meetings and events.

LEADER REQUIREMENTS:

All individuals wishing to become a 4-H Leader in Charlevoix County must complete the following procedures:

Complete a Gold Volunteer Application online in Volunteer Central – which includes:

- application
- references
- background checks (national and Michigan iChat)
- MIPSOR
- code of conduct
- media, evaluation, and medical agreement
- interview
- trainings (Welcome to MSUE, Introduction to Michigan 4-H, Working with Youth, Child Abuse Reporting Protocol)
- enroll in 4-H Online after acceptance

Attend a Leader In-Service

Complete and return the “Request for Official Establishment of a 4-H Club”

Complete Enrollment forms for leaders and members

Attend at least 5 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meetings / approved events per 4-H calendar year with at least 3 of them being council meetings (Sept – August current 4-H year) *no meeting in January, February, April & August.

All 4-H Sports & Fitness Program Leaders are encouraged to attend 1 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meeting during a quarter in which they are actively involved. The Council invites these leaders to present a post-season wrap report.

NOTE: In addition to the above process, individuals applying to be a 4-H Leader must either first serve as a co-Leader for one year in a current club, have been a 4-H leader in another county, or have a current 4-H leader willing to be their mentor for their first year. Leaders

are encouraged to attend a 4-H Volunteer Training Workshop in their project area. Scholarship money is available through the 4-H Council for training.

CLUB REQUIREMENTS:

1. Be open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.
2. Provide a welcoming and safe environment to all members.
3. Agree to follow state and county 4-H policies and procedures, and state and national 4-H guidelines for using the 4-H name and emblem.
4. Have at least 5 members from 2 or more families.
5. Have a volunteer leader who has successfully undergone the Michigan State University Extension Volunteer Process.
6. Be appropriately structured, with a leadership team of officers.
7. Have a calendar of planned educational programs and activities.
8. Follow all financial guidelines for 4-H groups outlined in the *Michigan 4-H Treasurer's Record Book* including preparing and providing to the county 4-H Extension staff an Annual Summary Financial Report for any funds raised or collected in the name of 4-H including account numbers and balances.
9. Submit a minimum of 6 club minutes per 4-H calendar year (September – August).
10. Complete a regular enrollment process for 4-H members and volunteers.
11. In the case of group dissolution, turn over all property and funds to the County 4-H staff on behalf of the Council.
12. Clubs and club leaders may determine the maximum size of their group, the age of club members, and how often they meet.
13. Club leaders need to contact the Charlevoix County 4-H office to inform them when the 4-H club has reached its membership limits, to ensure that no further referrals are made to that club.
14. Club leaders need to let members know what is expected of them and their parents, club activities, financial responsibilities, etc.
15. All clubs must donate or participate in at least 1 Charlevoix County 4-H Council fundraiser.

16. All clubs must have representations at every meeting or contact the office / other leader to aid with staying up to date on Charlevoix County 4-H.
17. All clubs will do one educational presentation or social activity at a 4-H council meeting each 4-H year.

ATTENDANCE:

1. Clubs and councils may establish their own attendance requirements, providing they are fair and impartial for their individual club(s).
2. Members are responsible for knowing and abiding by the requirements designated by their individual 4-H club regarding attendance at club meetings.
3. Members are responsible for knowing and abiding by the requirements designated by their individual county 4-H councils such as Market Livestock, Horse Developmental and Animal Husbandry - regarding attendance at county meetings to be eligible for Emmet-Charlevoix County Fair participation.
4. 4-H Members (age 8-19) are required to attend 3 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meetings / educational events per 4-H calendar year with at least 2 of them being a council meeting (September – August Current 4-H Year) in order to be eligible to participate in the 4-H classes at the Emmet-Charlevoix County Fair of the current 4-H year. *no meeting in January, February, April & August.
5. 4-H Cloverbuds (age 5-7) are encouraged to attend Charlevoix County 4-H Council meetings but are not required.
6. 4-H Leaders are required to attend at least 5 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meetings / approved events per 4-H calendar year with at least 3 of them being council meetings (September – August Current 4-H Year) *no meeting in January, February, April & August.
7. All 4-H Sports & Fitness Program Leaders are encouraged to attend 1 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meeting during a quarter in which they are actively involved.
8. 4-H Members (age 5-19) with the most attendance at meetings throughout the year will be eligible for an Overall 4-H year end Award.

REGISTRATIONS / ENROLLMENTS:

1. To maintain their status as a leader, leaders will be required to complete various reports during the program year:
 - Current Club Membership Re-Enrollments in 4-H Online

- Contracts, enrollments and registrations for all animal projects- see individual registrations
 - Financial Statement for the current 4-H calendar year (September – August)
 - Fair Registrations for members and clubs
 - Attend the annual 4-H leader in-service
 - Submit 6 club minutes to the 4-H Coordinator
 - Submit yearly club calendar each October
 - Attend at least 5 Charlevoix County 4-H Council meetings /approved events per 4-H calendar year with at least 3 of them being council meetings (September – August) *no meeting in January, February, April & August.
2. Enrollments for new members are due:
 - Current members - December 1st for participation in the county fair; additional requirements will be determined by individual boards such as Market Livestock, Animal Husbandry, and Horse Council.
 - New enrollments will be accepted from leaders 365 days a year. However, they must be received in the Charlevoix County office on or before May 1st to ensure eligibility for the Fair.
 3. Club leaders and members are required to complete the annual background check, agree to the Volunteer Code of Conduct and complete the Media, Evaluation, and Medical Agreement in Volunteer Central.

CLUB FUNDS & FUNDRAISING:

1. All clubs and programs are required to have an “Employer Identification Number” (EIN) through the Charlevoix County MSU Extension Office.
2. All clubs and programs checking and/or savings accounts are required to have 319-B North Lake Street, Boyne City, MI 49712 as their mailing address listed on the account.
3. Current monthly, quarterly, and annual bank statements are required to be on file at MSU Extension Office. Paper bank statements that are mailed to the MSU Extension office will be copied then placed in the club file and the original will be mailed to the club leader. However, if the paper bank statements are not mailed directly to the MSU Extension office, then online bank statements need to be emailed monthly or quarterly depending on the account to the 4-H Coordinator to print and put in the club file.
4. Clubs may choose to have dues as part of their club operations. Dues may be waived for income eligible families or scholarships provided.

5. Any funds remaining in a club or council account following the disbanding of that club or council will by USDA mandate revert back to the Charlevoix County 4-H Council or Charlevoix County 4-H. All property belonging to the group must be disbursed in the same manner. (In accordance with the Michigan 4-H Treasurer's Book)
6. Clubs may organize fundraising activities, providing they meet the following criteria:
 - Leaders must complete a "Request to Raise Funds/Accept Donations" application prior to the planned event
 - Funds must be raised and used for the promotion of the 4-H club, its membership and the county program - not individual members
 - A 4-H Fund Raiser Report Form must be completed after the fund raiser.
 - A yearly 4-H Annual Financial report, accompanied by a bank statement, must be completed by each 4-H club and county council.

COUNCILS / COMMITTEES:

1. County planning committees, sub-committees and developmental councils are to review their by-laws, rules and other policies as required by their individual mission statements.
2. An annual financial report, accompanied by a bank statement, must be completed by each county council.
3. Adults wishing to serve in officer roles on any of the county's councils must be an approved gold volunteer leaders at the time of the elections. Exceptions will be made only to those individuals who have submitted a volunteer application. Those individuals, if elected, will be considered an "officer-elect" until their leadership process is finalized. In the event that the individual does not complete the leadership process, they will lose their officer-elected position, and the council will appoint a replacement, according to the process outlined in their by-laws.

ANIMAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

Refer to Emmet Charlevoix Market Livestock Associations rules/guidelines Refer to Emmet Charlevoix Horse Council Rules.

Refer to Emmet Charlevoix Small Animal Superintendents.

OVERNIGHT HOUSING:

The Michigan 4-H Youth Development overnight housing policy applies to all 4-H-sponsored overnight youth events where adults are housed with (or nearby) youth, or where youth and unrelated adults share bathrooms.

The overnight housing policy was developed for the safety and well-being of both youth and adults involved with Michigan 4-H. This mandatory policy applies to any Michigan 4-H-sponsored state, regional, multi-county, county, or club-level overnight event where adults are housed with or share bathrooms with unrelated youth. This may include but is not limited to workshops, events, exchanges, overnight trips, lock-ins and camps. For purposes of this policy, a "Michigan 4-H-sponsored event" is defined as any event that has an affiliation with 4-H through the use of the name or emblem, and that involves a representative of 4-H (either a 4-H staff member or a 4-H volunteer who has successfully completed the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process).

Youth will be housed in alignment with their gender identity. Youth must be provided with a separate bed, mattress, or sleeping bag. Youth may not share a bed. Michigan 4-H allows 18 & 19-year-old 4-H members, as they are considered program youth participants, to house with younger 4-H members with written consent of a parent or legal guardian. Adult participants age 20 and older will be housed with other adult participants. Adults will not share a residential bathroom and/or be housed with a youth participant, with a few exceptions listed below. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to the appropriate event staff person using the MSU Extension Parent/Guardian consent to stay overnight with a 4-H chaperone form <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/consent-to-stay-overnight-at-a-michigan-4-h-event-with-participants-and-volunteers-age-18-and-older>.

- Exception 1: An adult participant may be housed with a related youth participant if a parent/guardian has provided written consent to the event coordinator; related is defined as immediate family members, including parents/guardians, grandparents, and siblings.
- Exception 2: An adult participant may stay with or share a bathroom with an unrelated youth participant if a parent/guardian has provided written consent to the event coordinator.
- Exception 3: Youth participants under age 18 may request to be housed with youth aged 18 and older as long as a parent/guardian has provided written consent to the event coordinator.

When cabin-type housing is being used with more than one youth, and adults need to be housed in the cabin with youth, more than one adult must be placed in that cabin.

All adult participants age 20 and older by January 1 of the current 4-H program year must successfully complete the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process prior to the overnight event. Youth participants ages 18 to 20 at the time of the event must complete the MSU Extension Background Check Form for 18-, 19- and 20-Year-Olds so staff members may complete their criminal history check and at least one reference check. Staff may not serve as references for 18, 19, and 20 year old youth. Local MSU Extension staff members are responsible for ensuring these background checks are completed before the event.

When determining housing arrangements, it is important to accommodate changes when able. Staff members are encouraged to provide flexible housing options upon request (for example, single room, private bathroom, floor changes).

Michigan 4-H Youth Development has a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 8 youth across all 4-H programs. 4-H staff members may choose to put in place a more stringent ratio, particularly when working with Cloverbud youth.

When staffing events, gender identity should be a consideration. When possible, there should be adult representation for each gender identity of youth participating in the program. For day programs, utilizing adults who have the same gender identity as youth participants is ideal, but not mandatory.

For overnight experiences, especially when housing chaperones in the same vicinity as youth, gender identity should be appropriately assigned. Any adult who is providing supervision and serving as a chaperone for youth participating in 4-H sponsored events (locally, regionally, statewide or nationally) must have successfully completed the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process and be registered as a gold volunteer with the 4-H program. Chaperones must be at least 21 years old.

Clubs or groups may, from time to time, plan events or activities that require them to travel out of the county. For this to occur, the following procedures must be followed in order for those involved to be covered by 4-H accident and liability insurance and to ensure proper communication with all parties involved:

The 4-H Coordinator must be notified of the planned event within 30 days of the start of the event;

- Complete itinerary of the event (dates and times)

- Location(s)
- List of Enrolled 4-H Youth Participating
- List of Adult gold volunteer chaperones
- Copies of driver's license photos and insurance forms on EVERY potential driver that is a gold volunteer
- Emergency phone numbers such as cell phones for all gold volunteers attending
- Copies of youth medical authorizations will be given to chaperones.

NOTE: In addition to the above policies, any new rules and regulations from the State 4-H Office must also be abided by.

CONDUCT POLICY:

Anyone participating in a 4-H sponsored event who is not abiding by the signed "4-H Code of Conduct" shall immediately be sent home at his/her own expense. **In cases where illegal activity has occurred, the proper legal authorities will be notified for a possible criminal investigation.**

Any violations of the above policy at county, regional, state or national events, or any violations of the "County Fair Conduct Policy" will result in immediate termination of membership in the Charlevoix County 4-H program for the remainder of the program year. If the current program year concludes within six months, the members' termination will be carried over into the next program year.

At the end of their termination period, the member may request to be re-enrolled in a county 4-H club. Depending on the severity of the situation the member may be accepted back into the 4-H county club. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis under the direction of the 4-H Staff. If the member is granted participation back into a 4-H Club the member will be given specific guidelines and restrictions during that program year and must complete all club and county requirements for behavior, attendance, paperwork and registrations to continue their enrollment in the program.

PENALTIES FOR MISBEHAVIOR:

4-H members, leaders, co-leaders, Jr-leaders, volunteers, parents, etc. will be expected to act in an acceptable and approved manor in accordance with the Michigan 4-H Mission Statement. We are a youth development program that involves volunteers in providing

positive, experiential, educational opportunities for and with youth. Our mission is to create environments, through collaborations, that build strong, healthy youth who are proactive in a complex and changing world. If a criminal offense occurs, any of the above individuals will be terminated immediately by a Charlevoix County 4-H Coordinator and a written notice will be sent to the offending party. Appropriate club or program individuals will be notified as well.

If behaviors are inappropriate by members, leaders, co-leaders, jr-leaders, volunteers, parents, etc. notification needs to be made in writing to the Charlevoix County 4-H Coordinator. Depending on the severity of the situation and if satisfactory documentation has been obtained that a 4-H rule(s) has been violated, a verbal warning followed by a written notice will be provided that will serve as a last warning. Again, depending on the severity of the offense, the leader or member will be given specific guidelines and restrictions that apply to the individual situation. A second offense will result in the offending party being terminated from Charlevoix County 4-H. In addition, all written notices will be communicated to the offender, parents, leader, and appropriate 4-H staff. Procedures for dealing with dismissal of an adult volunteer will be in accordance with the policies that are outlined in the Volunteer Selection Process.

Approved by the Charlevoix County 4-H Coordinator & the Charlevoix County 4-H Council on September 14, 2026.