

Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Statewide Chaperone Guidelines

July 2007

Purpose: To provide guidelines so that educational events of CCE are adequately chaperoned and the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension and/or specific event standards are followed. The following are minimum standards created under the advisement of The Wood Office. The first consideration should always be for the safety and well being of the participating youth and adults.

Note: For more specific guidelines or the latest updates, see the Financial Operations Resource Manual (F.O.R.M.) – Code 1501 at: http://staff.cce.cornell.edu/cce_library/manuals/form/#1500

Expected Results: These guidelines will help to maximize the educational value of the event experience and ensure the safety of all youth and adult participants. Failure to follow these standards puts the youth, the educator(s), the volunteer(s), and Cornell Cooperative Extension at risk. Every effort must be made to comply.

Responsibilities of Cooperative Extension Educator:

- Select and screen chaperones as required for “enrolled volunteers with on-going, supervised contact with youth” as written in the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association Volunteer Involvement Policy and Procedures (VIPP). If driving is required, a DMV check must be done. **If the DMV check is not done through The Wood Office the reports must be submitted to The Wood Office for review to meet insurance company requirements.**
- Ensure that supervising chaperones are 21 years or over and properly oriented including event details, chaperone responsibilities and emergency phone numbers of staff. Persons between 18 and 21 are permitted to serve as chaperones provided they are under the supervision of a chaperone at least 21 years of age.
- Provide chaperones with copy of signed medical emergency treatment forms for each participant before trip departure for duration of trip.
- Determine the number of chaperones needed based on the age of the participants, the nature of the event or facility and current CCE Guidelines.

CCE Guidelines to determine chaperone needs:

- A minimum of 2 adults need to be present at all times with youth groups. In the case of an accident or emergency, one adult can supervise the children while the other adult addresses the problem. Where guidelines exist for specific activities or the use of specific types of equipment, those guidelines will be followed. (Please refer to Tool L-3 – “CCE Youth Protection Guidelines for 4-H Club Leaders” in the “NYS 4-H Club Leader Handbook” for other safety guidelines at: <http://nys4h-staff.cce.cornell.edu/ClubManagement.php>.)

Program Setting	Ages 5-8	Ages 9-11	Ages 12+
	Ratio adult to youth (a minimum of 2 adults required at all times)		
Meetings or other low-risk activities	1:8	1:10	1:16
One-Day Trips	1:8	1:8	1:10
Overnight trips	1:6	1:8	1:10

CCE Guidelines to determine chaperone needs (continued):

- Overnight trips: If both male and female youth are attending, then at least 1 male and 1 female chaperone at least 21 years of age with valid and approved driver's licenses are required at the event. For some district and statewide events, male and female chaperones may be required for each delegation with boys and girls. Chaperones may be shared among different counties to provide required chaperone coverage (ie. A male chaperone may agree to chaperone a male 4-H member while at an event for a county with 2 female chaperones present). Event rules will state when male and female chaperones are needed for mixed delegations. Occasionally, a mix of male and female chaperones at the overall event will be adequate coverage.
- If the local Association or event has more stringent chaperone guidelines, those guidelines will be followed.
- Regardless of the number of vehicles, if trips are for more than 100 miles there must be a back-up driver in the event one of the drivers becomes incapacitated.
- **Effective October 1, 2007, all Extension van drivers with child riders must be 25 years of age unless the driver has completed the NYS driver safety course and has their MVR checked to meet driver requirements. They should also have vehicle familiarity training with the vehicle they will be driving.**

Responsibilities of Chaperone:

- Provide continuous supervision of delegation from the time trip begins until youth are returned to parents or guardians. Only leave if proper alternate supervision is arranged and approval is granted by the adult in charge of the event or delegation.
- If transporting others, always have the correct number of seat belts for number of youth in vehicle, automobile liability insurance and a valid New York State driver's license.
- Provide CCE with permission to conduct a criminal background check and a New York State DMV check as requested. Provide current address and phone number. Notify CCE of any changes.
- Be sure to carry Emergency Medical Treatment forms for each 4-H member in vehicle.
- Endorse overnight event guidelines that participants will not be allowed in the sleeping areas of participants of the opposite gender and youth may not room with unrelated adult unless in dorm setting with other youth and adults. All participants (except those with special planning or program responsibilities) must be in their assigned area at curfew and shall comply with quiet-hour and lights-out regulations.
- Volunteers must review the Chaperone Position Description and the Chaperone Guidelines and they must review and sign the Volunteer Agreement and the Volunteer Code of Conduct (where required).
- Abide by the CCE Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Abstain from gambling or other games where money is used to wager.
- Chaperones are responsible for ensuring that all members of their delegation attend scheduled sessions and events.
- Work with the Club Organizational Leader and/or Cooperative Extension Educator to assure that all event guidelines, emergency forms, travel information, participant information and other relevant information is reviewed and clearly understood, prior to the event.
- If not otherwise scheduled, plan times at regular intervals during the event to meet face-to-face with the participants assigned to them. All adults share responsibility for all youth at the event. Should a problem arise with any youth participant at the event, it should be brought to the attention of the event coordinator.
- Chaperones are under the supervision of the event coordinator. Any problems involving a chaperone will be handled by the event coordinator and referred to the CCE Educator and the Executive Director.

4-H Event Chaperone **Position Description**

Purpose of Position: 4-H Event Chaperones work with Cornell Cooperative Extension staff and other volunteers to supervise and provide guidance and occasionally transportation for youth participants of educational events.

Responsibilities:

- Abide by the Cornell Cooperative Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Know guidelines of event and the CCE Chaperoning Standards and follow them
- Attend event and/or participate in the program as needed
- Be dedicated to young people and sensitive to their needs
- Maintain control that is acceptable to the event
- Manage and work to resolve conflicts among youth
- Will work with event coordinator(s) to ensure appropriate behavior in accordance with specific event guidelines and “member code of conduct”
- Provide own transportation, as needed
- Be supportive of each and every youth
- Be responsible for all members in your assigned group
- Be able to verify the whereabouts of your members when called upon
- Contact Extension Staff and/or Event Coordinator as needed

Expected Results: Chaperones will work cooperatively with staff, youth, and other adults in order to maximize the educational value of the experience and to ensure the safety of all participants

Training and Support:

- Chaperone Orientation
- The Extension Educator and/or the designated Event Supervisor will be responsible for providing supervision, oversight and guidance for the event.

Qualifications:

- Be at least 21 years of age. Persons between 18 and 21 are permitted to serve as chaperones provided they are under the supervision of a chaperone at least 21 years of age.
- Sense of humor and patience
- Effective communication, organization, and interpersonal skills
- Enjoys working with youth and has a sincere interest in their growth and development
- Demonstrate flexibility, respect and acceptance of diverse youth
- Able to motivate and communicate with youth while nurturing positive self-esteem, decision making, responsibility and leadership skills
- A sincere interest in working with youth and other volunteers in an educational setting
- Ability to handle crisis effectively and calmly

Level of Background Screening Required

- Reference Check
- Criminal Background Check
- DMV Check, if chaperone responsibilities require transportation of others. **If the DMV check is not done through The Wood Office the reports must be submitted to The Wood Office for review to meet insurance company requirements.**

CCE Associations are encouraged to have a database of properly screened volunteers to act as back-up for other chaperones who are unable to follow through on a previous commitment.

Benefits:

- Derive satisfaction from helping youth to reach their full potential
- Opportunity for training and resume building
- Opportunity to build friendships with other volunteers
- Enhance personal leadership skills
- Support through Cornell Cooperative Extension and university resources

Cornell Cooperative Extension Association Volunteer Code of Conduct

Having signed a Cornell Cooperative Extension Association Volunteer Agreement, I accept responsibility to represent CCE with dignity and pride conducting myself as a positive role model for program participants. I will adhere to the following standards of behavior when engaged in assigned volunteer activities.

- Respect and adhere to CCE rules, policies and guidelines that relate to volunteer activity and the program I serve.
- Execute CCE business in an ethical manner.
- Preserve the confidentiality of information (and sign confidentiality agreement if required by my volunteer role) about program participants and CCE internal affairs that have been entrusted to me.
- Refrain from using my CCE volunteer status for personal or business financial gain.
- Fulfill my assigned volunteer duties, including completion of required records or reports, in a timely manner.
- Use my time wisely and work cooperatively with Extension staff and other volunteers.
- Participate in required training programs and use the recommended policies and procedures.
- Accept supervision and support from professional Extension staff and/or supervisory volunteers.
- Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all staff, other volunteers and all individuals who participate in CCE programs recognizing that people's values, beliefs, customs, and strengths differ.
- Encourage participation of and respect for individuals of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and inappropriate language.
- Commit no illegal or abusive act.
- Report all unsafe conditions and accidents to professional Extension staff as soon as possible.