TEXAS 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



TO: All County Extension Agents

SUBJECT: Annual Texas Education Agency and Local School Requirements

As an educational agency, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service supports the Texas Education Code and academic responsibility of student 4-H members. The dedication of Extension faculty to see that 4-H members comply with the provisions of the Texas Education Code is important to the effective adherence of the rule among our 4-H members. Extension faculty must be dedicated to complying with the Texas Education Code requirements in order for the Texas 4-H Program to maintain the status of an extracurricular organization.

The Commissioner of Education is not authorized to approve extracurricular organizations outside of school sponsored or UIL sponsored groups. Local Boards of Trustees are responsible for the sanctioning and approval of outside organizations as "extracurricular organizations" for their individual districts. Therefore, it is imperative for county Extension agents to ensure 4-H is designated as an extracurricular organization in each of the individual school districts residing in the county.

Educational options may still continue to vary among school districts as we move away from the COVID-19 crisis. Schools have the authority to develop local policies that could impact 4-H event participation. As we move forward, Texas 4-H will continue to provide opportunities for personal growth and development of our members and will work with local school districts to determine academic eligibility. Any Texas youth who meets the age requirements can participate in the 4-H program because of the partnership that was established through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and the creation of the Cooperative Extension Service (USDA, the land-grant university system, and local government). The tie with land-grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture assures a research and science base to the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Due to the conditions surrounding 4-H participation and the various learning options available to students, some additional clarification is being provided regarding academic eligibility. Families are encouraged to know and understand school policy regarding learning options and the implications for participating in various activities.

Regardless of your school instructional status (face-to-face, virtual, homeschool, etc.), all youth who meet the age/ grade requirements are eligible for 4-H membership. To participate in all 4-H competitive events, 4-H members must be academically eligible. To participate in 4-H non-competitive events that require missing school time, members must be academically eligible. Academic eligibility is the combination of several factors that includes but not limited to passing grades and no behavior/disciplinary restrictions specific to the time requested (i.e. DAEP, suspension). The

Declaration of Eligibility Form sent to school will ask schools if the member is academically eligible.

The school will then be asked to denote if an excused absence will be granted if the 4-H event occurs during school time. This decision will vary across school districts and their local policies regarding participation in extracurricular activities. If the school does not approve the excused absence for a 4-H activity but the member is academically eligible, the decision to attend the 4-H activity during school time will be left up to the family. The family should recognize that attendance at the 4-H activity during school time may result in an unexcused absence and influence class ranking. Please understand and respect the school's decision to make policies for their own community.



Texas 4-H Youth Development Office 1470 William D. Fitch Parkway | College Station, Texas 77845 http://texas4-h.tamu.edu | Tel. 979.845.1211 | Fax. 979.845.649 This document includes three important components for having a strong working relationship with local schools. The three areas are:

- 1. Establishment of the county 4-H Program as an extracurricular activity with local schools,
- 2. Securing Adjunct Faculty Status of all Extension Agents with local schools, and
- 3. Academic Eligibility for all active 4-H members who are participating in a 4-H event or activity.

All three of these processes are vital to both the school district for funding purposes and to Extension for 4-H youth to participate in events and activities throughout the school year.

It is considered best practice to meet and have open discussion about the 4-H program and how participation enhances the educational opportunities for every member depending on an individual's interests. The decision to seek extracurricular status for 4-H with a particular school will be based on the relationship with the administration of the particular ISD or individual school. Because of the many variables, one blanket "how to" or "must do" does not work in these circumstances.

Below are some important reminders as you start working on this annual process: Adjunct Faculty

School districts requiring that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees be screened or have
proof of screening is occurring statewide. Mrs. Jennifer Hobbs, Chief Human Resources Officer, can
work with you to get proof of agency employee screening. Some school districts are also requiring
finger printing. Extension employees must abide by the specific school requirements to receive
adjunct faculty status.

Eligibility of 4-H Members:

- Continuing on September 1, 2023, all 4-H youth, including youth in public, private, and/or home school, (whether physically in the classroom or receiving virtual instruction) must adhere to the following guidelines regarding extracurricular activities and academic eligibility:
 - o Complete a "Declaration of Eligibility Form", or
 - Name of 4-H member must appear on a list of eligible students to participate in a specific activity.
- Consistent with the UIL rules, the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program has adopted a three (3) school week waiting period upon change in status of school enrollment (i.e. from public to home, public to private, public to public, private to public, private to home, private to private, home to public, or home to private) before the 4-H member is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.
- All 4-H members must be officially enrolled (in an "active" status on 4HOnline) to be considered an
 official 4-H member. No excused absences can be requested for any youth who is not enrolled in the
 official 4-H enrollment system (4HOnline).

Please take time to review each of the enclosed attachments or link to resources.

ATTACHMENT	NAME	DESCRIPTION
	ANNUAL TASK LIST	Timeline for Extension Agents to review, plan, and implement request to schools for Extracurricular and
		Adjunct Faculty status, and Academic Eligibility.
4	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate
	REQUEST:	to send with the Extracurricular Status Resolution.
	Cover Letter Requesting	This letter requests and explains the importance of 4-
	Extracurricular Status for 4-H	H being recognized as an extracurricular activity.
В	EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS	This resolution will accompany the cover letter and is
	REQUEST:	the document that will be presented by the school
	Resolution Requesting Extracurricular	superintendent to the school board for official
	Status for 4-H	action. Once voted on, and approved, please request
		a signed copy for the county office files.
C	ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST:	Sample cover letter that county offices can replicate
	Cover Letter Requesting Adjunct	to send with the Adjunct Faculty Agreement. This
	Faculty Status	letter requests approval of adjunct faculty status for
		all degreed Extension
		agents/employees who will be serving in an official
		chaperoning capacity of 4-H youth throughout the
		year.
D	ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST:	Agreement that will be reviewed and approved by
	Adjunct Faculty Agreement	local school board granting adjunct faculty status to
		county staff. Once document has been approved,
		county office needs to send a copy to their District
		Extension Administrator or
		County Extension Director.
E	ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:	Outlines procedures for the county Extension office
	Procedures for Securing Eligibility	to use in establishing protocol for checking academic
	Information and Excused Absences	eligibility and for 4-H members to receive an excused
	For 4-H Members to Participate in 4-H	absence when
	Event or Activity	participating in 4-H events.
F	ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:	This is the form that will be used on an individual
	Academic Eligibility Form	basis to receive a declaration of academic eligibility
		for a 4-H member. This form must be completed by
		the 4-H Parent/
		Guardian and County Extension Agent prior to being
		given to school for certification.
Website Link	TEA-UIL Side-by-Side Document	This document provides explanations and
		interpretations of Commissioner of Education rules,
		UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, and statutes.
		Additional updates to this document will be made as
		information becomes available.
		http://www.uiltexas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side.

You will want to immediately update your files and replace them with these documents. It is critically important for all Extension faculty to become familiar with the contents of these materials in order to assure the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program complies with the Texas Education Code.

Please feel free to contact either one of us in the event that you have questions or concerns regarding this matter. Sincerely,

Montza Williams, Ed.D. 4-H Program Director

Jeff Ripley, Ph.D.

Associate Director - County Operations

Monte William

ANNUAL LIST OF TASK TO COMPLETED TO ENSURE PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

(These procedures cover all 4-H members in public, private, and home schools.)

Annual list of task to be completed by County Extension Staff

	Annual list of task to be completed by County Extension Staff	
MONTH/DATE		ATTACHMENT
COUNTY LEVEL		
JULY/AUGUST	As a total county Extension faculty, meet and discuss the Texas Education Code requirements and specify procedures the county is going to use during the upcoming	
	year. Also, plan for interpretation of the educational value of 4-H participation to teachers, school administration, and school boards.	
	During this discussion, the following components should be reviewed and completed as needed:	
	 4-H is a program available to all Texas' youth who meet the age requirements regardless of education option preferred 	
	 Request for Extracurricular Status for 4-H Request for Adjunct Faculty Status 	
	 4-H will utilize the local grading/discipline systems to determine academic 	
	 eligibility regardless of the chosen educational platform As always, Saturday competitive events will only require proof of academic 	
	 eligibility. Determine best practices for checking academic eligibility of 4-H members for 	
	event and activity participation.	
JULY/AUGUST	A meeting should be scheduled with each school superintendent and/or principal that has 4-H members who will be involved in 4-H activities during the year to discuss the procedures Extension plans to use. At this meeting, the following should occur:	
	Seek extracurricular status for 4-H. Note: The approval of organizations (approval of extracurricular organizations) outside of school sponsored or UIL sponsored groups continues to be	Attachment A Attachment B
	the responsibility of the local board of trustees. A resolution regarding Extracurricular Status of 4-H and an example letter for agents to use in contacting school superintendents requesting that 4-H be recognized as an extracurricular organization is provided.	
	 Request Adjunct Faculty Appointment for CEA(s) Counties are encouraged to develop a plan for cross-county CEA joint appointments to consolidate travel and supervisory responsibilities at major livestock shows. 	Attachment C Attachment D
	 Remember, when you have youth chosen for National 4-H Congress, National 4-H Conference, or Texas 4-H Leadership Conference, include one of the chaperones on your adjunct list. 	
AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER (MAY SEND REMINDERS DURING STOCK	Extension faculty, volunteers, 4-H members, and their parents should be informed in writing of the procedures that will be followed during the upcoming school year to ensure 4-H members abide by the provisions of the Texas Education Code, thus ensuring 4-H retain its extracurricular status.	
SHOW AND CONTEST TIME)	Families should visit with school officials to learn how the local school district will determine absences and how the various learning options could impact participation.	

THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	The Declaration of Eligibility Form for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service/4-H provides an alternate approach to the current system in ensuring 4-H's compliance with the Texas Education Code requirements. This procedure does not replace the current system of Extension agents submitting a written request in advance of each 4-H event to the appropriate school administrator to determine academic eligibility of 4-H youth. It adds another method of determining eligibility of 4-H members. The decision as to which system to implement should be made by the total county Extension faculty with each faculty member fully aware of the implications.	Attachment E Attachment F
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	Thirty days prior to a 4-H competitive activity or a 4-H activity that requires a member to be absent from school, put the procedures into action.	
	To address any problems or violations during the school year: Report them immediately to your District Extension Administrator. Report them to the local school administrator for them to enforce procedures covering violations of the Texas Education Code of members of approved non-UIL organizations. Many districts have incorporated these procedures into their discipline management systems.	
DISTRICT		
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	District Extension Administrators will immediately report any problems or violations to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service administrators responsible for the Texas Education Code, Associate Director – County Operations and State 4-H Program Director.	
STATE		
THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR AS NEEDED	The Associate Director – County Operations and the State 4-H Program Director will facilitate resolution of the problem and communicate action to the Texas Education Agency Complaint Department.	

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST

SAMPLE LETTER: Request for Extracurricular Status for 4-H

ANYWHERE COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE



Date

Superintendent's Name Name of School District School District Address School District City, State, Zip

Dear (Name of Superintendent):

On behalf of the 4-H members of ______County, I/we hereby respectfully request that the 4-H organization, by the attached resolution, be sanctioned as an extracurricular activity. We request the enclosed RESOLUTION be presented for consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of the (name of school district). I/we further request that questions regarding this RESOLUTION be directed to me/us in a timely manner so that I/we may prepare and present an appropriate response so as not to delay action on this request.

Finally, I/we request that a signed copy of this RESOLUTION, along with a copy of the minutes of the Board meeting, be forwarded to me/us for my/our files.

Thank you and members of the Board of Trustees for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

County Extension Agent's Name Title

Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

Any County Extension Office 123 Main Street | Anytown, Texas 12345 http://texas4-h.tamu.edu | Tel. 123.456.7890 | Fax.987.654.3210

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS REQUEST

SAMPLE RESOLUTION: Resolution requesting Extracurricular Status for 4-H

RESOLUTION

EXTRACURRICULAR STATUS OF 4-H ORGANIZATION

	(Complet	te name of school district)
	• .	th a quorum present and certified, esolution that recognizes the
	((Name of County)
	racurricular status consid	ion as approved for recognition and eligible deration under 19 Texas Administrative Code, aining to extracurricular activities.
to all ru	ules and regulations set f	under provisions of this resolution are subject forth under the 19 Texas Administrative Code ad designated officials of this school district.
W	request academic elig regardless if a schoo	&M AgriLife Extension gibility for all 4-H competitive activities, I absence is or is not required, and irposes when an absence is required.
Approved this	day of	20
Board of Trustee		 Superintendent

ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST

SAMPLE LETTER: Cover Letter requesting Adjunct Faculty Status

ANYWHERE COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE



Date Superintendent's Name Name of School District School District Address School District City, State, Zip Dear (Name of Superintendent): County Extension Staff, I/we hereby respectfully request approval On behalf of the of the attached Adjunct Faculty Agreement with the___ _____Independent School District. The State Board of Education passed an amendment to 19 TAC§129.21 (j). Requirements for Student Attendance Accounting for State Funding Purposes allows public school students to be considered "in attendance" when participating in off-campus activities with an adjunct staff member of the school district. Section 3 of the Student Attendance Handbook states: (1) The student is participating in an activity that is approved by the local board of school trustees and is under the direction of a member of the professional or paraprofessional staff of the school district, or an adjunct staff member (A) has a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and (B) is eligible for participation in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. County requests the agents listed on the enclosed Adjunct Faculty Agreement be awarded adjunct staff member status for the period of time indicated on the agreement. Independent School District will accept this request. Please let me know if you would like to schedule an appointment to discuss the amendment and request or if you need further information. Thank you and members of the Board of Trustees for your consideration of this request. Sincerely, County Extension Agents Name Title Attachment: Resolution for Extracurricular Status of 4-H Organization

> Any County Extension Office 123 Main Street | Anytown, Texas 12345 http://texas4-h.tamu.edu | Tel. 123.456.7890 | Fax. 987.654.3210

ADJUNCT FACULTY REQUEST

SAMPLE TEMPLATE: Adjunct Faculty Agreement

	TATE OF TEXAS TY OF				
School	District, hereinafter refet tment of the herein nam	erred to as "District." A qu	uorum having been esta	blished, the Board prod	Independent ceeded to consider the Independent School
Upon	consideration and vote o	ofin favor, Independent School Dist	is h	nereby named as adjunc	ct faculty member(s) of the
	tment to wit:	macpenaem sensor bis	thet subject to the follow	wing considerations and	provisions of such
1.	This appointment shal day of		day of	, 20and remail	n in effect until the
2.	This appointment will	include the Texas A&M A	AgriLife Extension Service	e employees listed belo	ow:
	NAME	TITLE	DEGREE	INSTITU [*]	TION DATE
 4. 	Independent School Di				M Agril ife Extension
-11	Service.	er(3) is and shall remain	an employee, in good se	anding, of the rexus ne	WITH EXTENSION
5.		er(s) is and shall remain			ct Extension Administrator
6.	unemployment insura	er(s) shall receive all grounce, and any and all otherall have no responsibility	er plans for the benefit o	of Texas A&M AgriLife E	
activiti admini superv superv emplo	es as designated from tir istrative personnel. Adju ised, and controlled by a isory authority of the Dis	ne to time by adjunct fac nct faculty members' ac and through supervisory	ulty members for which tivities and participation personnel of Texas A&M trator or County Extension	h notice shall be given in with students of the So I AgriLife Extension Servion Director. Adjunct fac	chool District are directed, vice pursuant to the ulty member(s) is not the
	Count	y Extension Agent(s) wh	o have/has been herein	designated as an adjun	ct faculty member.
Tla :		- In demanded to Calcad Di		Deard of Tweeters of an	:

This appointment is made by the Independent School District by and through the Board of Trustees of said district for the benefit of allowing voluntary student participation in programs conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in recognition of the educational benefits arising from such participation and activities and/or directed by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. This appointment is made in accordance with the provisions of Section 129.21 (j)(1) of the Texas Administrative Code authorizing the school to deem such participating students in attendance for foundation school program purposes.

Attachment | ${f D}$

This appointment of the herein named	County Exten	County Extension Agent(s),		
	yee) is/are not intended nor shall be construed	d as a waiver of any claim or defense		
of sovereign or governmental immunity from li				
District or any of its employees, agents, officers,	and/or board members in the performance of	governmental functions.		
Signed this day of , 20	ı			
Jigned 1113	 :			
		Independent School District		
	_			
	Bv:			

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Procedures for securing Academic Eligibility Information and Excused Absences for 4-H Members to participate in 4-H Event or Activity

This procedure applies to ALL 4-H events or activities (competitive or non-competitive) and all 4-H members in public, private, and/or home school that requires a 4-H member to be absent from school. For instance, if a 4-H member is a member of a state planning task force and needs to miss a day of school to participate, the 4-H member would have to be eligible according to the Texas Education Code to be excused from school.

There are two ways a County Extension Office can request academic eligibility for 4-H members. One is on an individual basis using the Declaration of Eligibility Form (Attachment F) for times when only one or two 4-H members may be needing an absence. The second option is for times when a large number of youth may be needing an excused absence, such as a county or major stock show. The steps below outline how the county office needs to proceed with each of the processes.

EGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR	
August/September	County Extension Agents should meet with school officials to <u>determine the steps</u> the agent needs to take to assist 4-H members in obtaining excused absences to participate in 4-H events and to determine eligibility of 4-H members for competitive events.
D DAYS PRIOR TO ANY 4-H EVENT/ACT	IVITY NEEDING ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY CHECKED
Declaring academic eligibility for small number of 4-H members	 Ensure that all members needing an excused absence are ACTIVE 4-H member Complete the County Agent section of the Declaration of Eligibility Form. Provide the form to either the 4-H member and request they submit to the school for completion, or have the 4-H parent/guardian complete the first section, return back to the County Extension Office and then submit as a group to the respective school campuses. 4-H member then returns completed form back to the County Extension Office within the timeframe given by the office.
Declaring academic eligibility for large number of 4-H members	Extension agents should prepare a document on official letterhead which includes the items listed below and submit to each school/campus requesting eligibility status for each 4-H member. a. Name of 4-H member(s) involved b. School they attend c. Current grade level in school d. Dates of proposed absence(s) e. Name of event f. Educational value g. Chaperone List is returned back to County Extension Office by school/campus.
ESPONSE FROM SCHOOL ON DECLARA	TION OF ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY
Eligible	The school should respond to CEA if there are any students who are academically eligible. County Extension Office should follow up with the school/campus if no response is received.
Ineligible	If a 4-H member is academically ineligible for a 4-H competitive event, the agent must notify the 4-H member, their parents and the sponsoring agency, by letter, o this situation. If the parent has any questions, they should be referred to the school administrator for the family and school to resolve eligibility issues.

If county Extension faculty and schools develop and agree on procedures they deem more efficient and effective and still ensures 4-H's compliance with the Texas Education Code requirements, they should inform their District Extension Administrator/County Extension Director of the plan to be followed.

DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM INSTRUCTIONS

4-H'ers should complete a separate form for each competitive event/activity in which they plan to participate. The original form should be returned to the county Extension office by the deadline established by the County Extension Office.

NOTE: Schools requiring a copy of this form should make their copy before returning it to the student.

Parent/Guardian Section

- 1. Parent/Guardian will select the information being requested. It is either:
 - Academic eligibility information only. (Used to verify academic eligibility only for 4-H competitive events/activities.), or
 - Academic eligibility information and authorization to receive an excused absence from school. (Used to verify academic
 eligibility as well as receive authorization to receive an excused absence. This would be used for events held during
 school hours such as stock shows, state and national 4-H contests and events, etc.)
- 2. Complete the date and name of activity. (Used to notify school officials of exact dates/times a student would be participating in a 4-H activity or representing 4-H at an event.)
- 3. Parent/Guardian signature is required. The signature of the parent/guardian confirms that this person is aware of the academic eligibility and excused absence requirements of the Texas Education Code.

County Extension Agent Section

- 1. Extension Office will complete this section and certify the youth is a 4-H member and his/her participation in the event.
- 2. County Extension Agent (with adjunct faculty status) will sign the form.

School Principal/Designee Section

- 1. Principal, or designee, will indicate the 4-H members eligibility status, options are:
 - Academically eligible to participate
 - Not academically eligible to participate
- 2. The principal or designee will indicate whether or not an excused absence will be granted.
- 3. Principal, or designee, will sign and date the form in order to be valid.

4-H family should follow instructions provided by the County Extension Office on returning form to the Extension Office by the given deadline.



Texas 4-H Youth Development Program DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

This form is requested in accordance with the requirement of the Texas Education Code and in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency and local school board policies.

Instructions: Complete one form per activity. 4-H member should return original form to the County Extension Office

PARENT/G	GUARDIAN SECTION		
In accordance with 4-H policy, provided by our loc	cal Extension office, I respectfully request:		
(CHECK ONE)			
Academic eligibility information only.			
Academic eligibility information and authoriza	ation to receive an excused absence from school.		
Date of Activity: Name of Activity:			
Signature of Parent/Guardian:			
COUNTY EXTE	NSION AGENT SECTION		
I hereby certify that	is a member of 4-H in		
	activity representing 4-H. He/she will be under the		
	on Service faculty or agency's designated volunteer		
leader.	on service ractity of agency's designated volunteer		
leauer.			
Date	Signature of County Extension Agent		
SCHOOL PR	INCIPAL OR DESIGNEE		
ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY (CHECK ONE)			
I do certify that the student is academically el	ligible to participate in the above mentioned activity.		
I do not certify the student because he/she is mentioned activity.	NOT academically eligible to participate in the above		
EXCUSED ABSENCE (CHECK ONE)	EDUCATIONAL STATUS (CHECK ONE)		
An excused absence will be granted.	Face-to-Face (on campus)		
An excused absence will NOT be granted.	Virtual Option		
Does not apply.	Homeschooled		
Date	Signature of Principal or Designee		
	Name of School		