



# Virginia 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Policies and Guidelines

As the 4-H Youth Development Program trains the next generation of youth, it is meeting the needs of today's society by helping members develop computer and information technology skills while fulfilling the need for increased channels of communication between 4-H members, leaders, staff, and the public. Using the World Wide Web enables the 4-H program to meet these needs. The Virginia 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Policies and Guidelines provides the information for developing 4-H web sites and for the conduct of 4-H members, adult volunteers, and staff when representing 4-H on the World Wide Web.

The definition of a 4-H organization for the purpose of these policies and guidelines refers to unit, multi-unit or district based groups such as 4-H Leadership Councils, Volunteer Leaders Associations, All Star Chapters, etc. The state levels of these organizations are part of the VCE web site and are thus already compliant with these policies.

Adults, or youth led by an experienced adult, can create a 4-H club or organization web site to increase communication within their club or organization and with the public while learning invaluable technology and life skills. At the present time, 4-H clubs and organizations web sites must be hosted on a non-VCE server. VCE and 4-H does not provide funds to cover the costs of hosting a 4-H club or organization website.

The individual(s) responsible for the 4-H web site have freedom of design as long as they comply with Virginia 4-H Youth Development policy, Virginia Cooperative Extension policy, and local, county, state, or national laws. This includes copyright laws. The responsible adult club or organization leader must complete and submit the Approval Form for a 4-H Club and Organization Web Site to the Unit 4-H staff prior to establishing a web site. The club or organization leader must notify the Unit 4-H staff when major changes are made to the web site or when the web site will no longer be maintained. The county 4-H staff should confirm that all guidelines are followed.

## Part 1 – Web Site Content Policies and Guidelines

- 1) **4-H Name and Emblem Usage:** All 4-H web sites must contain the 4-H name and Clover Emblem. Using the 4-H Clover emblem on an Internet site must adhere to federal regulations. Basic policies for the 4-H Clover include the following:
  - a) Only use an official 4-H Clover emblem graphic obtained from an authorized 4-H source which includes the language "18 USC 707" to the right of the stem. You need to maintain the proper height and width proportions of the image. Official 4 H emblem graphics can be obtained from the 4-H web site: [http://www.national4hheadquarters.gov/emblem/4h\\_emblems.htm](http://www.national4hheadquarters.gov/emblem/4h_emblems.htm)

b) Text or graphics should never cross or be superimposed on top of the 4-H Clover emblem. Use of the 4-H Clover as a desktop wallpaper or web page background is inappropriate.

c) The 4-H Clover should not be rotated, turned on its side or cropped in any way. You should not change the characteristics of the 4-H Clover emblem - color, style, height/width proportions, etc. The correct ink color for printing the 4-H emblem is PMS 347.

Complete information about 4-H Name and Emblem Use and a downloadable emblem is available at [www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/4h\\_name.htm](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/4h_name.htm). Discuss questions with Unit 4-H Staff.

- 2) **Mandatory Links:** The front page of the 4-H web site must link to: a) The local Virginia Cooperative Extension Unit office web site b) Virginia 4-H state web site – <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/> c) Virginia Cooperative Extension state web site– <http://www.ext.vt.edu/>
- 3) **Non-discrimination statement:** All web sites must include the following VCE non-discrimination statement in its entirety. "Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, veteran status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/ affirmative action employer." This statement must be located on the front page of the club web site.
- 4) **Protection:** The privacy of 4-H members and adult volunteers participating in the program must be protected. This includes, but is not limited to, the following items:
  - a) Youth and volunteer's mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers must not be posted.
  - b) Youth in photographs must not be identified by name. Materials which identify youth are not appropriate; any material which violates this policy must be removed immediately upon request.
  - c) All youth and adults whose image, voice, performance and/or comments are displayed on the 4-H Club web site must complete a Virginia 4-H Media Release Form. The completed form must be provided to the Unit Extension office where the club or organization is enrolled.
- 5) **Content:** Web site content must be directly related to 4-H Youth Development programs, clubs, projects, and activities. Web site content must represent the 4-H Youth Development program in a positive way. Commercial businesses, products, or resources cannot be promoted or sold. If a particular product, educational program or other specifically named item is included, the VCE disclaimer statement must be included that clearly states that neither the Virginia 4-H Youth Development Program nor Virginia Cooperative Extension is endorsing the said item. The following is the

official disclaimer statement that must be used: “Disclaimer: Commercial products are named in this publication for informational purposes only. Virginia Cooperative Extension does not endorse these products and does not intend discrimination against other products which also may be suitable.”

6) **Mission Statement:** The use of the Virginia 4-H Mission Statement on the web site is encouraged. Use the mission statement in its entirety. “To develop youth and adults working with those youth to realize their full potential - becoming effective, contributing citizens through participation in research-based, non-formal, hands-on educational experiences.” As an alternative the web site may wish to include the national definition of 4-H: “4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.”

7) **Updates:** The nature of a web site is to keep the information up-to-date. It is recommended that the web site include a “Last Updated” date to inform users of the last revision. The volunteer leader responsible for the web site should develop a management schedule that will identify all of the maintenance tasks and who will complete them. If a web site can no longer be maintained or the 4-H club or organization dissolves, the web site should be removed.

8) **Email:** It is recommended that contact information for the club or organization should be accomplished by including an email address to “Webmaster.” Another alternative is to use a separate email address for the club or organization, not a personal email address. The adult volunteer responsible for the web site should develop a system to respond to email questions in a timely, accurate, and appropriate manner, keeping in mind that this email represents the 4-H Youth Development Program.

## **Part 2 – 4-H Member and Adult Volunteer Web Conduct Policies**

As representatives of Virginia 4-H Youth Development Program and Virginia Cooperative Extension, 4-H members, adult volunteers, and staff must conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner in all 4-H programs including those represented on the World Wide Web.

Each 4-H member, adult volunteer, and staff member must subscribe to the following policies concerning the web sites, chat, email, and other technological communications that are transmitted, posted, or willingly received while acting in a 4-H Youth Development capacity.

Members, adult volunteers, or staff, acting on behalf of the 4-H Youth Development Program:

- Shall not transmit, post, or willingly receive correspondence, text, graphics, movies, sounds, or other media which contains: profanity, advocacy of the use or possession of illegal substances or alcoholic beverages, advocacy of the illegal use or the illegal possession of weapons, or solicitation or the advocacy of sexual conduct.

- Shall not attempt to gain access to areas, information, servers, domains, or other material to which expressed permission has not been given. Also, at no time will members/volunteer leaders intentionally violate the laws governing copyrighted material.
- Shall not willingly harass others through the use of technology. Harassment by email, chats, or otherwise shall not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to harassment based upon race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Shall not misrepresent or assist someone else in misrepresenting his or her true identity to others through technology. Members/volunteer leaders will not claim to be or represent themselves as someone else. Those who represent the 4-H Youth Development Program through technology do so under their own identity.
- Shall not seek to promote specific personal opinions, concerns, projects or businesses on behalf of the Virginia 4-H Youth Development Program, Virginia Tech or Virginia State University . A 4-H club or organization web site is not an appropriate forum for members/volunteer leaders to advocate their own personal religious beliefs and political opinions.

### **Part 3 – Consequences**

Violators of any of the policies described in the Virginia 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Policies and Guidelines will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Consequences of violating the guidelines may include:

- Revocation of authorization to author 4-H web sites
- Assessing the member or leader the cost of damages and repairs
- Removal from the Virginia 4-H Youth Development Program

Interpretations of these guidelines by Virginia Cooperative Extension staff are binding upon members and adult volunteers. Consequences determined by Virginia Cooperative Extension for violations are binding upon members and adult volunteers.

#### **4-H Club and Organization Web Site Duties 4-H Volunteer Leader and Member Duties**

- Comply with the Virginia 4-H Youth Development's Virginia 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Policies and Guidelines.
- Complete the Approval Form for a 4-H Club and Organization Web Site to notify Unit 4-H staff prior to establishing a web site.
- Notify Unit 4-H staff when major changes are made to the web site or when the web site will no longer be maintained.

#### **Unit 4-H Staff Duties**

- Process Approval Form for a 4-H Club and Organization Web Site.
- Periodically review web site. Confirm that all policies are being followed and enforce consequences of any violations.
- Provide updates on any changes to the policies.

## **Part 4 – Design Guidelines**

### **Content/Planning**

Before you plan your 4-H club/organization web page, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why do we want to have a web site? To tell people about 4-H? To attract new members? To publicize club/organization activities?
- Who do we want to use this site? Only members or the general public or both?
- How old will the audience be for the web site?
- What information will users want to find?
- What will make users come back to our site?

Once you've decided on the main purpose for your web page, you can begin to design and map it. You might want to use a template; there is a list of helpful sites with templates at the end of this document.

Make sure that you and at least one other person proofread your web page for spelling and grammar.

### **Safety**

Be sure to review the policies regarding use of leader and member names and contact information. These policies are included for your protection.

Some commercial web site providers allow you to set up a protected area. This part of your web site requires a user name and a password to view it. Although this can only be viewed by people who have your permission to view it, don't include personal contact information here either, unless it's absolutely necessary. There are dishonest individuals that might be able to "hack" their way in.

### **Layout**

- Your site should be organized. The important information should be at the top and in larger or bolder letters than less important information. You might include a brief list of topics, with target links to specific areas of your page.
- When designing the layout of your page, you should start with a pencil and paper. Draw out a flow chart or map of what you want your page to look like.
- Remember the "Three Click Rule". It should never take more than three clicks to get to anything on your web page.
- Use tables to organize information if it makes sense.
- Use white space around text and graphics.

### **Colors**

- Just because you have more than 200 colors available to use, doesn't mean you have to use them all! Use only a few colors that coordinate and are easy on your eye.
- A good rule of thumb is to use a light background with darker letters.
- Avoid red letters because some people are colorblind and cannot see red letters.

- Try printing your web page on a black and white printer AND a color printer. Is it legible on both types of printers?

### Graphics

- If you use buttons, lines or textured backgrounds, they should coordinate and not overpower the text or make it difficult to read.
- Some photographs or large graphic files are slow to open. Remember that some people may be viewing your page with a slow modem. Minimize the use of very large files.
- Make sure the font (type of letters) is large enough to see, even on a small monitor.
- Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. It's very difficult to read and it is the same as shouting on the Internet.

### Technical

- Always test your web page by viewing it with at least two different browsers - like Netscape Communicator and Internet Explorer. Sometimes what looks great in one of these browsers, doesn't work at all in the other one.
- Do all of the external and internal target links work? You will have to test these individually and test them on a regular basis. There's nothing more annoying than links that don't go anywhere or that go to the wrong site.
- Do email links work? Try sending an email from your web page and make sure the right person receives it. Will this person respond to messages in a timely manner?
- How fast does the page load? Test this on as slow a modem as you can find.
- Limit the total size of your page (megabytes). It will take less memory to store it and your Internet Service Provider or web page host may limit the size of your file(s).

### 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Checklist

- Design your web site. You must include the following information in the 4-H web site:
  - o The 4-H name and Clover emblem following proper use guidelines.
  - o Links to the:
    - ☞ Virginia Cooperative Extension Unit office web site
    - ☞ Virginia 4-H state web site – <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/>
    - ☞ Virginia Cooperative Extension state web site–
- o <http://www.ext.vt.edu/>
- o ☞ Non-Discrimination statement and if needed the Disclaimer statement
- Do not include personal information regarding 4-H members and leaders.
- Create method for people to request information such as a club or organization email address or webmaster email address.
- Include the Virginia 4-H Mission Statement (recommended)
- Complete and submit the Approval Form for a 4-H Club and Organization Web Site to the Unit Cooperative Extension 4-H staff prior to posting your club and organization site on the web. The County 4-H staff will authorize you to use the 4-H name and emblem on your web site and recognize your web site as an official Virginia 4-H site.

## Other Sources of Information

The Internet offers a wealth of information on web design. Here are some useful sites.

**Creating a Web Site for Your 4-H Program:** California 4-H Computer Corps. Includes HTML tips, lists of hosting services and templates.

[fourh.ucdavis.edu/compcorps/webdesign/index.htm](http://fourh.ucdavis.edu/compcorps/webdesign/index.htm)

**How Web Pages Work:** Great write up on HTML, creating tables and frames and using images in your web page. [www.howstuffworks.com/web-page.htm](http://www.howstuffworks.com/web-page.htm)

**School Web Page Templates:** pre-designed web page templates designed for schools and school based groups. [www.massnetworks.org/~nicoley/schools/template/TemplateOV.html](http://www.massnetworks.org/~nicoley/schools/template/TemplateOV.html)

**Web Diner Inc.:** Tutorials on HTML, downloadable clip art and templates.

[www.webdiner.com](http://www.webdiner.com)

**Clip Art Center:** Free clipart, buttons, bullets, backgrounds and icons. [www.clip-art-center.com](http://www.clip-art-center.com)

### Credits

This document was created using information from the following documents:

“New Jersey 4-H Web Policy,” Rutgers Cooperative Extension;

“Approval Form for a 4-H Youth Development Web Site,” Rutgers Cooperative Extension;

“4-H Youth Development Program Website Guidelines,” California 4-H Youth Development Program;

“New Hampshire Web Page Guidelines for 4-H Groups,” University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension;

“4-H Club Web Posting Policy,” Washington State University Cooperative Extension.

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Approved by the 4-H Leadership Council in May, 2005.

**Date:** Unit

**4-H Club/Organization Web Site Administrator** (the volunteer leader responsible for the web site) Name Address City State Zip Home Phone Other Phone Email 4-H Club or Organization  
Other members and leaders that will help with web page development: Please use an extra sheet to describe what types of information will be posted on this web site.

**URL of the Site**

**Required Signatures:** As the primary adult volunteer leader for this club, I have read and understand the Virginia 4-H Club and Organization Web Site Policy and Guidelines. I will follow this policy and confirm that the 4-H members and other contributors to the web site have been informed of them. Adult Volunteer (print name) Signature Date I approve the request for a 4-H Club and Organization web site as described above. Unit 4-H Staff (print name) Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date