

Ohio 4-H Youth Development Program Complaint, Protest, and Grievance Review Process

The purpose of this document is to provide a systematic and consistent process for reviewing a complaint, protest or grievance. This process is applicable to any complaint, protest or grievance related to 4-H rules, including county 4-H program participation and 4-H Code of Conduct violation allegations. These procedures are not applicable to challenge county, independent or state fair rules or placements.

NOTE: At no time should any OSU Extension employee respond to a 4-H related complaint, protest or grievance unless they are the respective county or state 4-H professional or have assisted the 4-H professional in the appropriate process listed above in regard to the specific complaint, protest or grievance being referenced.

Complaint, Protest or Grievance Process:

Step One – Written Complaint, Protest or Grievance:

- a. *If regarding an event or decision:* The individual(s) filing a complaint, protest or grievance shall file a formal written statement to the county 4-H professional or the state 4-H professional in charge of said event. The statement must be filed no more than fourteen (14) days after the alleged incident. No OSU Extension employee should address a complaint until the written copy of the complaint, protest or grievance is filed with the county/state 4-H professional. The 4-H professional should review the complaint, protest or grievance to determine if it is a 4-H, county fair or other concern. County fair or other concerns should be submitted to the appropriate supervisory individual(s). If a 4-H related complaint, protest, or grievance is received, it should immediately without comment be forwarded to the appropriate county/state 4-H professional.
- b. *If regarding a 4-H volunteer, member, parent, or 4-H professional:* The individual(s) filing a complaint shall file a formal written statement to the direct supervisor of the person. If it is regarding a 4-H volunteer, member, or parent, submit to the 4-H professional who oversees the supervision of the program. If the issue is regarding a 4-H professional, submit to the professional's direct supervisor and State 4-H Leadership.

The written statement must contain the following information, at a minimum:

- 1) *The date of the incident(s).*
- 2) *A complete statement of all relevant known facts.*
- 3) *List of names, addresses, and, if available, phone numbers and email addresses of people who were involved.*
 - a. *Also indicate if an involved party is an OSU Extension employee.*
- 4) *Any rules, regulations, policies and/or procedures allegedly violated or misapplied OR violations of the standards of behavior or code of conduct.*
- 5) *A proposed resolution OR action steps to rectify the violation.*
- 6) *Printed name(s) and signature(s) of the individual(s) filing the complaint, protest or grievance.*



The 4-H professional/supervisor will allow the interested parties an opportunity to provide information, analyze the facts and provide a written response to the parties within fourteen (15) business days. Direct supervisor(s) and State 4-H Leadership should receive a copy of the initial filing and be copied on all correspondence related to the filed complaint, protest or grievance.

Step Two – The 4-H professional/supervisor will investigate the complaint, protest or grievance thoroughly and submit a decision to all parties involved and the State 4-H Leadership as soon as reasonably possible.

Step Three – A grievant may submit an appeal of the decision to the State 4-H Youth Development Administration as appropriate. The appeal should include copies of the original grievance and the county or state 4-H professional's response. The administrator will review facts from knowledgeable parties and issue a response within fourteen (15) business days following receipt of the appeal. This decision will be final.

Revised November 2023 by Hannah Epley and Kirk Bloir.

Extension Professional Use Only

Date Complaint, Protest or Grievance Received: _____

Person Receiving the Complaint, Protest, or Grievance: _____

Decision: