This online orientation will be required for volunteers and staff who have been screened and approved. Once they have completed the orientation and the 4-H Volunteer Orientation Reflection, they will be certified as volunteers in the North Dakota 4-H program.
Volunteers play an important role in fulfilling the mission of 4-H, which is to create supportive learning environments for youth and adults to reach their full potential as capable, competent and caring citizens.
Whether we are staff members or volunteers, teens or adults, all of us who work closely with young people have the potential to affect the well-being of children profoundly. In addition to providing safe and appropriate environments, we also must be positive role models, focusing on how we communicate with youth, our methods of discipline and problem-solving, and how sensitive we are to the individual needs of all youth.
The primary purpose of the Youth Protection Policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth participants, their families, volunteers and paid staff. Every new volunteer who applies to work with Extension youth programs and all paid Extension staff participate in a process that fulfills the requirements of this policy. A prospective volunteer’s acceptance as an NDSU Extension Service volunteer is contingent on clearance through the North Dakota Child Abuse Information Index and the North Dakota Office of Attorney General Convicted Sex Offenders and Offenders Against Children – Public List, and satisfactory results from a reference and review process.
In North Dakota, volunteers with the NDSU Extension Service are considered “unpaid staff” when they are functioning in an official capacity on behalf of the NDSU Extension Service.

Every six years, volunteers and staff are asked to reaffirm their commitment to promoting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants by resubmitting an Adult Behavioral Expectation Form and a Volunteer Information Form for Recertification.

The responsibility for the well-being of children lies with each and every one of us. The North Dakota State University Extension Youth Protection process is designed to help us carefully select volunteers who work with our youth development programs.
The following guidelines help establish positive environments and program parameters that promote safety and well-being for all participants.
To protect all individuals, volunteers and staff need to work with young people in reasonably open places where others are welcome to enter (not behind closed doors).

In overnight situations, remember that you should not be alone with a youth in a room.
Spending time alone with a single child can be positive and helpful, but it also can be a reason for concern for everyone involved.

Be sure an adult is not alone with a nonfamily-related youth.

When you are working with young people, the recommendation is to follow the “rule of three.” Always have at least three people present during programming or transporting:
- Two adults and one youth or
- One adult, one family-related youth and one nonfamily-related youth

Never be alone with a nonfamily-related youth in your program after hours or off-site.
Parents and guardians are always welcomed and encouraged to attend Extension youth program meetings and events.
Adults need to respect the privacy of youth. The privacy issue is especially relevant in situations where youth are changing clothes or taking showers in facilities lacking privacy. In these situations, staff (volunteer and paid) should intrude only to the extent that health and safety require.

Bathrooms/locker rooms are restricted to the same gender of youth and adults.

Adults never should shower in front of youth.

Adults should enter individual shower/bathrooms when youth are present only in extreme medical or behavior emergencies.
A minimum of one responsible adult (at least 18 years old) will be available for every eight to 10 youth for any NDSU Extension Service youth-related activities involving an overnight stay, as consistent with national 4-H guidelines. The youngest responsible adult should be at least three years older than the oldest participant.

If possible, the best practice is to have at least two adults present in case of an emergency so one adult can stay with the group and the other attend to the emergency (bring someone to the ER, etc.).

A best practice also is to have one responsible adult for each gender whenever possible.
Paid staff and volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional well-being of youth under their supervision. Signs of injury or suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported.

Reporters mandated by state law include all paid Extension staff, as well as most medical staff, school professionals, teachers and administrators, counselors, social workers, child-care workers, law enforcement officers and clergy. Mandated reporters who suspect child abuse or neglect and fail to report that suspicion can be charged with a class B misdemeanor. Extension volunteers are encouraged to report child abuse using NDSU Form PB404 (Form J).
Adult behavior (Extension paid staff and volunteers) can have an impact on youth in many situations and environments during Extension programming and outside of those responsibilities.

These behaviors may include but are not limited to the use of alcohol and other drugs, use of inappropriate language and sharing of personal beliefs/opinions.

Adults will not use alcohol or illegal drugs or be under their influence while at youth programs or while having responsibility for youth in NDSU Extension Service programs. Adults should inform others that alcohol or illegal drugs are not allowed at Extension youth programs.

Adults are expected to use appropriate language (no swearing, ridiculing of others or aggressive behavior). Adults also should keep personal religious or political beliefs to themselves.
Extension staff and volunteers will not, under any circumstances, discipline youth by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food and shelter.
An adult should not share a room with one minor child who is not his/her child. Youth should room with other youth. If the situation dictates that an adult and a youth must share a room, several (three or more) youth should share the room with a single adult. Preferably, unrelated adults will not share lodging with a youth.
When using social media for programming purposes, do not post photos/information without parental or participant permission.
When working with young people, set appropriate boundaries:

• Do not share personal information.

• Do not accept or give personal gifts.

• Never be alone with a youth in your program after hours or off-site.

• Maintain appropriate communication and contact regarding programming.

• Avoid repeated lengthy personal communication with individual participants.
Recognizing Child Abuse: What You Should Know

The first step in helping abused children is learning to recognize the symptoms of child abuse. Although child abuse is divided into four types - physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment - the types are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, often is emotionally maltreated as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected. Any child at any age may experience any of the types of child abuse. Children older than age 5 are more likely to be physically abused and to suffer moderate injury than are children under age 5.
Experienced educators likely have seen all forms of child abuse at one time or another. They are alert to signs such as these that may signal the presence of child abuse.

**The child:**
- Shows sudden changes in behavior
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Is always watchful
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, an overachiever or too responsible
- Comes to school early, stays late and does not want to go home
Experienced educators likely have seen all forms of child abuse at one time or another. They are alert to signs such as these that may signal the presence of child abuse.

**The parent:**
- Shows little concern for the child, rarely responding to the school's requests for information, conferences or home visits
- Denies the existence of - or blames the child for - the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless or burdensome
- Demands perfection or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention and satisfaction of emotional needs
Experienced educators likely have seen all forms of child abuse at one time or another. They are alert to signs such as these that may signal the presence of child abuse.

**The parent and child:**

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State that they do not like each other

None of these signs proves that child abuse is present in a family. Any of them may be found in any parent or child at one time or another. When these signs appear repeatedly or in combination, they should cause the educator to take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse. That second look may reveal further signs of abuse or signs of a particular kind of child abuse.
For more information on recognizing child abuse, visit Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota at [www.pcand.org/](http://www.pcand.org/).
Congratulations!

You have completed the volunteer orientation. Please print the certificate, and sign, date and submit it with your completed *Volunteer Orientation Reflection* to your local Extension staff.

Thank you again for your interest in supporting the North Dakota 4-H program.
When Volunteer Orientation has Been Completed

- Complete Volunteer Orientation Reflection and submit to Extension staff.
- Print and sign the Certificate of Completion.
- Sign Adult Behavioral Expectations (PB400.)