

# Sample Constitution

*Each 4-H club should develop and adopt its own operating rules in the form of a club constitution. The constitution must abide by 4-H Alberta Program Policies and Procedures as published on the 4-H Alberta website. The following is a default, which the 4-H club will operate under until they are able to develop their own. The members and leaders of a 4-H club will cooperatively develop, discuss and adopt a constitution that fits their own club and community. It may or may not be similar to this constitution.*

*If you would like an electronic copy of this constitution to work with, download a copy from the 4-H Alberta web site at [www.4h.ab.ca](http://www.4h.ab.ca).*

## Article I

This 4-H club will abide by all 4-H Alberta Program Policies and Procedures.

### A. Name

1. The name of this club is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Changes to the club name must be decided by a majority vote of all current 4-H members in the club.
3. The 4-H name, emblem, pledge and motto are protected by trademark and copyright. Alterations, additions, or deletions are expressly forbidden.

### B. Membership

1. Eligibility
  - a. Youth who have reached their ninth birthday and have not reached their twenty-first birthday on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current club year can join this club as a 4-H member.
    - i. Those members who are, on or before Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, aged 9-11 will be considered Junior members, aged 12-14 will be considered Intermediate members, and aged 15-20 will be considered Senior members.
    - ii. These members must meet the basic member expectations and will have full membership rights and responsibilities.
  - b. The club must annually vote to include or not include Cleaver Kids. Cleaver Kids are youth who have reached their sixth birthday and have not reached their ninth birthday on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current club year.
    - i. Cleaver Kids are not required to meet the basic member expectations, but should follow the guidelines for their project as laid out in the Cleaver Kid Leaders' Guide and the 4-H Alberta Cleaver Kids Policy.).
    - ii. Cleaver Kids may attend general club meetings but do not have voting privileges as outlined in Article III, and may not hold an executive position.
    - iii. Cleaver Kids may be invited to join the general membership for some activities, but will generally have stand alone, age appropriate, events.
2. Basic member expectations
  - a. A 4-H member must meet all the following requirements to receive credit for a club year.
    - a. Complete project records and have them signed by the appropriate adult volunteer.
    - b. Attend a minimum of 70% of the designated club activities.

- c. Complete a communication activity. This must be prepared and presented by the member to the club, and is at least three minutes in length.
  - d. Participate in the club's achievement event. (If unable to attend in person, prior arrangement must be confirmed with the club leader to designate member's participation in some aspect of the Achievement event.)
  - e. Participate in the club's designated community service activity.
3. A 4-H member who lives away from home will be allowed to remain active in this club if the member:
- a. Has the approval of the general leader and applicable project leader(s)
  - b. Has the approval of the club membership through majority vote
  - c. Meets all the basic member requirements
  - d. Has the approval of all the committees responsible for events, shows and competitions that the member wants to participate in.

### **C. Registration**

1. The member's registration fee must be paid before the member will receive any project supplies or can participate in any club, district, regional, provincial or national 4-H programs, as applicable for their age category.
2. This club will submit an accurate and complete club registration by December 1 of each year. New members and/or leaders may be added after that date so long as they will be able to meet all of the member/leader expectations.

### **D. Adult Leaders**

1. A 4-H leader, defined as a person in a position of trust, in this club must:
  - a. Be at least 18 years of age.
  - b. Be elected by members each year.
  - c. Be registered with 4-H Alberta.
  - d. Submit the required leader screening documents.
  - e. Complete training as required.
2. A person cannot be registered as both a leader and a member in this club.
3. This club will have at least one general leader whose duties include:
  - a. Administration of the club.
  - b. Support of the members in the organization and operation of the club.
  - c. Ensuring that the club provides opportunities for members to develop effective project and personal skills.
  - d. Ensuring that the club is represented on the district 4-H council and assisting with district 4-H events
  - e. Ensuring that information is communicated to the members, other leaders, volunteers and parents in a timely manner.
4. Other leaders will be recruited as needed. Positions could include:
  - a. One or more assistant leaders whose duties are to assist the general club leader.
  - b. One or more project leaders for each project offered. (The Cleaver Kids project requires a ratio of 1 leader for every 5 registered Cleaver Kids.) A project leader's duties include:
    - i. Helping members develop their project skills
    - ii. Being aware of achievement event requirements and helping members prepare for their achievement event.

5. Leaders registered with 4-H Alberta are encouraged to participate in available leadership development opportunities.
6. The general, assistant and project leaders make up the adult advisory committee. The adult advisory committee will work collaboratively with the executive members.

#### **E. Adult Volunteers**

1. A 4-H volunteer in this club must:
  - a. Be at least 18 years of age.
  - b. Be recruited by the adult advisory committee or the appropriate 4-H event committee
  - c. Be listed in the club minutes and/or registered with 4-H Alberta annually
  - d. Always have a registered 4-H leader present when acting in a position of trust.
2. Volunteers registered with 4-H Alberta are encouraged to participate in available leadership and development opportunities.

#### **F. 4-H Supporters**

1. A 4-H supporter registered by this club must:
  - a. Be at least 18 years of age
  - b. Wish to maintain ties with 4-H Alberta
  - c. Provide personal, financial, or mentoring support to the members and leaders of the club currently, or in the past.
  - d. Ineligible to hold a position of trust.
2. Supporters registered with 4-H Alberta will remain on the mail/email lists to assist in maintaining ties with 4-H Alberta, but are not eligible to participate in provincial leadership and development opportunities.

#### **G. Meetings**

1. This club will hold a minimum of six business meetings during the club year.

#### **H. Quorum**

1. At least one-half of all eligible (see I.B.1) members shall constitute a quorum for club meetings.

## **Article II- Purpose and Objectives**

This 4-H Club was formed to advance the following purpose and objectives and to provide service to the community.

#### **A. Vision**

4-H Alberta is recognized and respected as the youth organization of choice for developing outstanding future community leaders and citizens.

#### **B. Mission**

4-H Alberta inspires and empowers youth to reach their full potential through learning, connecting and having fun.

#### **C. Objectives**

1. The 4-H program offers the opportunity for members to:

- a. Acquire knowledge and skills in specific project areas.
- b. Learn effective communication skills.
- c. Increase their self- esteem.
- d. Develop and use effective leadership skills.
- e. Work in teams with other youth and adults in this community.
- f. Meet new people across Alberta and Canada.

## **Article III**

### **A. Election and Voting Procedure**

1. Voting on routine matters, not involving persons present, will be done by a show of hands, unless any objection is voiced.
2. Only current members of this club are eligible to vote.
3. A majority vote, more than half of the votes cast, is required to pass a motion or elect someone to office.
4. The president may only vote in the case of a tie, or by secret ballot with the rest of the membership during elections.
5. Elections will be by nomination and secret ballot at the first or second meeting of the club year.
6. Terms of office for all leaders and the executive will be one year.

### **B. The Executive**

1. The club will elect a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. They may also elect a reporter, parliamentarian and a historian. These officers form the executive committee. It is their duty to carry out the wishes of the total club membership and to represent the total club membership without allowing personal or minority group opinions to influence their action.
2. No member will hold any one executive position for more than two years.
3. Elected officers will work collaboratively with the adult advisory committee.

### **C. Duties of the executive**

1. President
  - a. Conduct orderly and efficient meetings according to parliamentary procedure.
  - b. Prepare an agenda before each meeting in consultation with the secretary and general leader.
2. Vice President
  - a. In the absence of the president, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the president.
  - b. Assist the president as required
  - c. Should the president have to leave the club, the vice president will automatically become the new president.
3. Secretary
  - a. Help the president prepare the agenda.
  - b. Handle all the club correspondence, and read pertinent items at meetings.
  - c. Record the minutes of each meeting and share them with the club membership in a timely manner,
  - d. Record names of volunteers who are not registered with 4-H Alberta.

- e. The secretary's records will be given to the historian, or general leader if a historian had not been elected, at the end of the club year.
4. Treasurer
  - a. Keep accurate, up-to-date record of club finances and report to the club at meetings.
  - b. Administer the club finances, issue co-signed cheques, and receive and pay bills.
  - c. Prepare year-end financial summary, and current inventory of assets (including location), and submit to club appointed adult reviewers.
  - d. The treasurer's records will be given to the historian, or general leader if a historian has not been elected, at the end of the club year
5. Reporter (if applicable)
  - a. Inform radio, newspaper and other media outlets of club activities.
  - b. Assist in maintaining the club electronic and social media information (i.e. website, Facebook page, etc.). In collaboration with the 4-H leader, identify and confirm all applicable protection of privacy is adhered to.
6. Parliamentarian (if applicable)
  - a. Know parliamentary procedure and assist members in running effective meetings.
  - b. Knows the club constitution and ensures it is followed.
  - c. Ensures club constitution is reviewed annually.
7. Historian (if applicable)
  - a. Collect, organize, and keep record of current club activities for historical reference.
  - b. Receive secretary's and treasurer's records at the end of the club year for retention in the club's library.
  - c. Make the club's historical records available as required.

#### **D. District Council Representatives**

1. The club will elect representatives, as indicated, in the local District Council constitution, to attend all district council meetings. An alternate will be elected to represent the club if one of the representatives is unavailable.

#### **E. Committees**

1. The club can appoint and dissolve committees as needed to carry out specific matters of business, which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the leaders or executive.
2. The committee chair is responsible for the direction of the work of the committee and will arrange any necessary meetings. He or she will report to the entire club when required.

## **Article IV - Projects**

All projects within this club will follow the applicable Policies and Procedures of all levels of 4-H Alberta.

## **Article V**

### **A. 4-H Club Files**

1. All members of the 4-H club executive and the adult advisory committee will have access to all club records and files as requested.

2. The secretary's and treasurer's records will be given to the historian, or general leader if a historian has not been elected, at the end of the club year and retained in the club's library for future reference.
  - a. Financial records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years. A motion to dispose of the financial records must be passed at a club meeting prior to disposition.
3. Club leaders, who are changing their position or leaving the club, will turn all leadership material over to their successor.
4. Personal information of members and leaders will be protected and only be released to those outside the club with permission of the individual (or parents if under age 18).

**B. Review of Financial Records**

The accounts and records of the treasurer will be reviewed by a minimum of two volunteer adults not associated with the club's executive, or an accounting professional, at the end of the club year. The reviewer(s) will submit a report to the club.

**C. Banking Powers**

1. Any 2 of the president, vice president, secretary or treasurer will sign all cheques.
2. No two members from the same family will sign the same cheque.

## **Article VI**

**A. Distribution of the constitution**

1. Each new 4-H family will receive a copy of the latest revision of this constitution upon entering the 4-H club.
2. Each family, the 4-H District Key Leader, and the Regional 4-H Office will receive a copy of the revised constitution when amendments are made.
3. A copy of this constitution and all subsequent revisions will be retained in the 4-H club's library.

**B. Amendment of Constitution**

1. This constitution will be reviewed by the club each year.
2. Amendments may be made once per year at a selected regular club meeting. Notice of amendments must be given at the previous regular club meeting.
3. A three-quarters majority is required to approve any amendment to this constitution.
4. The date of amendment will be recorded at the beginning of the constitution.

## **Article VII**

**A. Splitting Of The Club**

1. If this 4-H club decides, by majority secret ballot vote, to split into two or more separate clubs, the club which retains the former meeting location will also keep the original club name and accumulated years of club operation. If both clubs remain at the same location, the club with the largest membership during the first year of operation will keep the former name.
2. If the decision of the club is to split, all assets of the club shall be split according to the percentage of current members remaining with the club and the percentage of current members moving to the new club.

- a. If there is a disagreement over the distribution of physical assets they will be sold and all proceeds added to the account before being distributed according to the percentage of members in each of the “new” clubs. The sale must be overseen by an agreed upon, neutral, party.

**B. The Dissolution Of The Club**

1. Upon a decision, by majority secret ballot vote, to dissolve this 4-H club:
  - a. All physical assets of the club shall be distributed as most appropriate:
    - i. Sold, with the funds being added to the club’s accounts and/or
    - ii. Donated to another 4-H group, museum, or non-profit group and/or
    - iii. Held by a designated person or organization for a specified period of time (for those items ‘personal’ to the club – i.e. club banners) after which the local 4-H District Council should be contacted for advice as to storage or distribution.
  - b. All club accounts will be closed with funds being sent to the local District 4-H Council to be held for a maximum of 3 years, with instructions that:
    - i. If the club re-forms within the 3 years, funds will be transferred back to the club for their use.
    - ii. If, at the end of 3 years, the club has not re-formed the funds are to be disbursed, as instructed by the club at the time of their dissolution. (Note – Funds must either remain within the 4-H program at some level or be donated to another non-profit group or groups.)
2. The club’s records (historical, financial – including inventory of assets) will be treated in the same manner as the club’s account.
3. If the club is dissolved through a lack of membership or leadership, the previous year’s adult advisory committee and executive shall have the power to dispose of club assets and accounts as if there had been a decision to dissolve by vote.