A policy is a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions. Guidelines or rules are put into place to develop an expected way for the group to operate. In Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, all 4-H clubs/groups are governed by the statewide 4-H policies. Additional local policies may be developed, but the goal is to operate with the minimum number of policies necessary. Policies are developed by the 4-H club or group members with the support of the 4-H club/group leader. Policies communicate governance to the 4-H club/group and are reviewed annually.

Consider the following as you develop policies to govern your 4-H club/group.

1. **Have you reviewed the existing policies to see if they are valid and clearly understood?**

2. **Is the policy needed?**
   a. Will the policy improve the governance of the 4-H club/group?
   b. What is the purpose of the policy?
   c. Does the policy further the mission 4-H?
   d. Is the proposed policy the result of an ongoing concern the group needs to address, rather than the result of a particular incident?

3. **If the policy is needed:**
   a. Are youth members involved in developing policy?
   b. Where is the policy readily accessible in writing to all members, leaders and families?
   c. Is there a process for enforcing the policy? Who will enforce the policy?
   d. Are the consequences of policy enforcement appropriate and foster the positive development of the member and the group?
   e. Is the policy free of any evidence of discrimination due to sex, race, national origin, or disability?
   f. Does the policy create financial or transportation difficulties?
   g. Has the proposed policy been reviewed by your County 4-H Youth Development Staff prior to final adoption? Is the policy consistent with county, state, or national policies?
   h. Has the 4-H club/group reviewed and voted to adopt the policy?

4. **Continued Monitoring and Review of Policies**
   a. Does each new and continuing member annually receive a copy of the policies?
   b. Are policies reviewed annually?
   c. Are policies enforced consistently and fairly?

**Additional Resources:**
- Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development Policies: [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/policies/index.cfm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/policies/index.cfm)
- National Name and Emblem: [http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/emblem/4h_name.htm](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/emblem/4h_name.htm) and [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/policies/symbols.cfm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/policies/symbols.cfm)
- County 4-H Leader Organizations and The County 4-H Youth Development Professional: [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/volunteers/documents/4HVolunteerLeaderRoles.pdf](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/volunteers/documents/4HVolunteerLeaderRoles.pdf)