



## **West Virginia University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Code of Conduct**

*West Virginia University Extension Service uses unique strategies and opportunities to engage individuals in training programs. Volunteers are fundamental to the accomplishment of the WVUES mission.*

*An Extension Master Gardener volunteer is a non-paid representative of the local WVUES Agriculture & Natural Resource unit for which they provide services. A fully vetted Extension Master Gardener volunteer is a volunteer who has completed the full volunteer vetting process including: application, reference checks, criminal background check, certification in Rule 1.7 "Protecting Our Children" and WVU Rule 1.6 "Title IX" and all trainings required by the West Virginia Extension Master Gardener Program.*

*West Virginia Extension Master Gardener volunteers are expected to function within the guidelines of West Virginia University, the West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Extension Master Gardener program. West Virginia Extension Master Gardeners shall be individuals of personal integrity. A standard of behavior for all individuals involved in the Master Gardener program is one of the key components for creating a welcoming environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Any individual participating and/or volunteering with the West Virginia University Extension Service Master Gardener Program at any level (individual, club, county, regional, state, national and international) is subject to WVUES behavior and standards and rules governing participation and involvement as outlined in the WVUES Volunteer Code of Conduct. These standards are put in place to protect you the volunteer, the Extension Master Gardener program, WVUES and West Virginia University. The Code of Conduct establishes expectations that all WVUES volunteers are expected to observe.*

*The WVUES Master Gardener Volunteer Code of Conduct applies and will be enforced with Extension Master Gardener volunteers as follows:*

- While participating and attending a WVUES sponsored program (e.g., club meeting, project meeting, activity, event, any learning opportunity sponsored by WVUES),*
- While participating in any county, state, national or international event sponsored by WVUES,*
- At the West Virginia State Fair during any WVUES-sponsored event or assigned volunteer responsibility,*
- While representing the WVUES Master Gardener program at any national or international event,*
- At all times throughout a volunteers' service or volunteer participation when behavior outside of the West Virginia Extension Master Gardener program puts others at risk or has the potential to put individual at risk during service as an Extension Master Gardener volunteer.*

*The opportunity to participate in and volunteer with the WVUES Master Gardener program is a privilege and honor, not a right. All volunteers must sign the WVUES Master Gardener Code of Conduct and will not be recognized as a volunteer until this, as well as all requirements to volunteer and participate in the program, are met.*

*This Code of Conduct is a contractual agreement accepted by volunteers who commit to the WVUES Master Gardener program or any program serving youth sponsored by WVUES. The West Virginia Extension Master Gardener program provides quality, educational programs accessible to all. The*

*primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants (members, youth, their parents and families, professionals and volunteers).*

- 1. I accept my responsibility as a West Virginia University Extension Service Master Gardener volunteer. I will uphold the standards of the program. I will refrain from behavior that negatively represents myself, my family, my community, the Extension Master Gardener program or West Virginia University. I will obey the laws of the locality, county, state and nation.*
- 2. I will accept the responsibility to represent my individual county Extension Master Gardener program and the West Virginia Extension Master Gardener program with dignity and pride.*
- 3. I will respect, adhere to and enforce the rules, policies and guidelines established by my individual county Extension Master Gardener program, the West Virginia Extension Master Gardener program, the West Virginia University Extension Service and West Virginia University.*
- 4. I will adhere to all policies as outlined by West Virginia University and WVUES. These include but are not limited to Rule 1.7, 'Children on Campus,' West Virginia University Rule 1.6, 'Title IX' and the WVUES 'Above Suspicion Policy.' I will report any violation of these policies as trained.*
- 5. I accept my responsibility to be informed and follow the policies, rules and deadlines established by the WVUES Master Gardener Program. I will not cheat, lie, knowingly furnish false information, deceive, or otherwise engage in dishonest, unethical or illegal behaviors. I will not encourage others to disregard or intentionally violate conditions of WVUES Master Gardener participation.*
- 6. I will promote a spirit of inclusion and welcome participation of individuals from all backgrounds. I will practice fair-mindedness by being open to ideas and opinions of others. I will comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws. I will not participate in behaviors that discriminate against other people. I will promote a welcoming environment by fostering a climate based on social justice.*
- 7. I will not abuse any participant by physical or verbal means and will report such abuse, if observed. I will abstain from harassment or bullying of another participant, volunteer or staff member (either in person or face to face or through social media or other communication venues).*
- 8. I will ensure a safe environment for myself and others involved in the programs that I am leading. I will not act in an irresponsible or potentially hazardous manner. I will access and operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in compliance with laws, rules of the WVUES Master Gardener program and general safety practices*
- 9. I will model healthy choices. I will not possess or use illegal substances. I will not use tobacco or alcohol products during an Extension Master Gardener program. I will not attend Extension Master Gardener programs under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance.*
- 10. I will be courteous and respectful to other individuals and their property. I will dress in a manner that is appropriate, tasteful and respectful. I will not use, abuse or take another individual's personal belongings. I will not damage facilities.*
- 11. I will communicate (oral, written and electronic) in an honest, respectful manner in all situations involving the Extension Master Gardener program. I will refrain from communication that is negative, offensive, destructive or harmful to others. I will not engage in or tolerate slander, put-downs, insults, taunting, name-calling, yelling, profane language, sexual innuendos and other comments or hostile behaviors likely to offend, hurt or set a bad example. If I witness this behavior, I will contact a WVUES official. If the situation is escalating to where it is unsafe for me or others, I will contact authorities. I will report*

*immediately any threats to my or other program participant's emotional or physical well-being to a WVUES professional.*

12. *I will abide by Rule 1.7 (Title IX). When working with minors, I will abide by the WVU policy on the safety of minors, Rule 1.6. I understand if I am working with youth, I am a mandated reporter and will follow guidelines as outlined by the State of West Virginia and West Virginia University.*
13. *I will use appropriate channels within West Virginia University Extension Service to address concerns and conflicts. I will accept the decision of the individual and/or group that has the leadership and authority to make decisions, even if the decision is not the one I personally desire.*

### **Code of Conduct**

*I have read and understand the Code of Conduct. I understand and agree that any action on my part that contradicts any portion of this Code of Conduct is grounds for the suspension and/or dismissal of my volunteer or member status with the West Virginia University Extension Master Gardener program. I have read and understand the WVUES Procedures for Dealing with Volunteer Issues.  Yes  No*

### **Non-Discrimination**

*Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. If selected as an Extension Master Gardener volunteer do you agree to abide by and uphold these policies?  Yes  No*

### **Background Check**

*A criminal background check will be conducted every three years; a check of the National Sexual Predator website will be checked on years the full background check is not conducted. If I have any responsibilities driving for a WVUES program, a DMV check will be conducted yearly. I give my permission for these checks to be conducted.  Yes  No*

### **Criminal Record**

*Have you ever been convicted of a crime, other than a minor traffic offense?  Yes  No*

*If yes, please explain:*

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*(Note: A prior conviction is not an automatic bar to volunteering. The type of conviction and when it occurred will be evaluated before any decision is made.)*

### **Disclosure**

*I agree to disclose any arrests, convictions or indictments within 72 hours of their occurrence. This disclosure will be to the Youth Protection/Compliance Specialist. In the event the specialist cannot be reached, I will disclose to my local WVU Extension faculty member who will report to the proper individuals.  Yes  No*

### **Title IX Policy**

*Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) is a federal law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Since Cooperative Extension WVUES programs receive federal financial assistance for education programs, they must adhere to United States Department of Agriculture regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.*

*West Virginia University Board of Governors Rule 1.6 prohibits discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, domestic misconduct, stalking and retaliation that occurs on WVU property (including*

Jackson's Mill) or during a WVU-sponsored activity (which includes any Master Gardener event). As a part of this policy, all persons are expected to engage in conduct that meets professional standards, take appropriate action to prevent prohibited conduct and avoid behavior that a reasonable person would construe as prohibited conduct.

I agree that, if selected as a Master Gardener volunteer I will abide by all Title IX policies and all policies and regulations related to the prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, domestic misconduct, stalking and retaliation.  **Yes**  **No**

I understand that I may be required, at any time, to take part in training related to these policies in order to continue with the Master Gardener program and I agree that I will report any Title IX violation as trained.  **Yes**  **No**

### **Children on Campus Policy**

West Virginia University Board of Governors Rule 1.7 prescribes the rules and regulations to protect any person under the age of 18 attending a WVU program (including any 4-H program or event) on WVU property. This policy mirrors West Virginia Code §49-6A-1 to -11 by reiterating that all volunteers are mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, including physical abuse or neglect, to the West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources Child Protective Services, the WVU Title IX Coordinator and local police. The policy also mandates training for all employees and volunteers who will have direct contact with children.

I agree that, if selected as a Master Gardener volunteer, I will be a Mandated Reporter as defined by West Virginia Code §49-6A-1 to -11; that I will abide by all laws and regulations regarding the protection of persons under the age of 18; and that I must participate in training related to these policies prior to serving as a volunteer.  **Yes**  **No**

I understand that the information I have provided may be verified by contacting persons or organizations named in this application and I hereby release from liability any person or organization that provides information concerning me to the representatives of West Virginia University Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources. In signing this application, I affirm that the information I have given herein is true and correct. If selected as a volunteer, I understand I serve at the request of the West Virginia University Extension Service. That request can be withdrawn for any reason or no reason at any time.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension Professional Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_