



4-H SOCIAL MEDIA PRIDE PLAYBOOK | June 2022

GOAL: Proactively prepare the social media teams at National 4-H Council and across the 4-H system for potential issues and pushback related to LGBTQ+ Pride Month content in June.

STRATEGY: 4-H stands by its values, believing in the power of young people – all young people - and providing a safe, inclusive place for children to grow and improve their communities. We will utilize learnings from previous years and take necessary steps to reduce negative engagement and reputational risk. Strategy and messaging come from previous learnings and the crisis playbook and DE&I guidelines developed by Porter Novelli.

WHAT WE ARE DOING: The team managing 4-H national social channels will share posts with Porter Novelli – our reputation management agency of record - for review at least one week in advance to review for reputational risk. In addition, Porter Novelli has prepared a series of response protocols to utilize in June, including guidelines for understanding the risk associated with various activities and appropriate responses, as well as template messaging.

THE HOLDING STATEMENT

“National 4-H Council continues to affirm our shared values of inclusion for all youth in 4-H programs. In 4-H, we believe in the power of young people – all young people. We see that every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us.”

ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS: We analyzed the posts from June 2021 that received the most engagement:

- Pride logo
 - Several people took issue with changing the 4-H logo and questioned Council's right to do so. While we will use Pride imagery this year, we will not alter the logo.
- “Inclusion” heart motion graphic
 - People felt 4-H was engaging in a topic outside its traditional agriculture mission and questioned relevancy. This graphic was posted on the same day as the pride logo and garnered similar levels of attention.

The high levels of engagement last year were caused by a series of reactions to these posts. First, many conservative commenters criticized the posts. Then, when Council took down the logo post, there was a series of reactions from the progressive side of the audience criticizing Council for backing down. This unfortunately led to highly visible posts that turned into a culture war with commenters criticizing each other and Council.

Overall, we expect there will be pushback on Pride-related posts Council should continue to share its values on social media regardless of the negative pushback. Where possible, content should focus on how 4-H is a place where every kid is welcomed, and spotlight individual youth voices and stories. This helps explain the reason we are engaging with Pride Month. We also recommend standing by our posts and not altering them unless absolutely necessary.

We believe this will limit negative engagement.

GUIDELINES:

GREEN / LEVEL 1 – WARNING

Engagement on posts such as comments, shares or direct messages that reflect the standard negative response. The social team should review and respond according to standard community guidelines.

Examples:

- Someone comments, “what about straight pride.”
- Someone comments, “stop pushing your agenda.”

YELLOW / LEVEL 2 – CAUTION

Engagement on posts such as comments, shares or direct messages containing hate speech, non-violent threats, language that negatively targets the LGBTQ+ community, general harassment or bullying. The social team should hide and report the engagements according to standard community guidelines.



Examples:

- Someone accuses 4-H or 4-H leaders of being “pedophiles”
- Someone comments, “homosexuality is a sin, and you all deserve to rot in hell.”

RED / LEVEL 3 – SEVERE

An overwhelming amount of negative engagement that could result in a media story. Engage Porter Novelli and prepare to release a statement

Examples:

- A 4-H post goes viral or is shared by a prominent hostile social account
- An offended Facebook user creates a public event/group to organize a protest at a 4-H meeting/event.

SAMPLE MESSAGING

Holding Statement (again):

- “National 4-H Council continues to affirm our shared values of inclusion for all youth in 4-H programs. In 4-H, we believe in the power of young people – all young people. We see that every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us.”

Q&A:

Q: Why is 4-H not posting as much Pride content as last year?

A: We believe in using social media as a tool to communicate what 4-H is doing for members, alumni and communities. This includes celebrating Pride. We will continue to post content that shares our inclusive message and supports the LGBTQ+ community.

Q: Why did 4-H not change the logo for Pride as it has done in years past?

A: National 4-H council does not own the 4-H logo and does not have the authority to alter the logo.

Q: Why post about Pride at all?

A: Pride is a time to celebrate inclusion and belonging for the LGBTQ+ community. We believe in using this time to remind 4-H members and our 4-H community that all people are welcomed and belong in 4-H always.

In-Person Statement: In the event that leaders are asked to comment on Pride in public or private interactions, they can use this language:

“At 4-H, we believe in the power of young people. We see that every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us. For more than 100 years, we have welcomed young people of all beliefs and backgrounds, giving youth a voice to express who they are and how they make their lives and communities better. Today we continue the important work of creating a safe environment where students can be themselves.”

If you have any questions, contact Sarita Bhargava at National 4-H Council: (571) 249-6605