

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

A SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

As stated in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2010 (OS) every student who begins secondary school during or after the 1999-2000 school year must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). As of July 2011, a student can begin to fulfill this requirement in the summer he/she is entering grade 9.

PURPOSE

The Purpose of the community involvement requirement is to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities.

TIMING

A student can begin completing his/her community involvement hours in the summer before entering grade 9 and must complete the 40 hour minimum requirement by the end of grade 12. These activities must be completed outside scheduled class time and must not be part of a credit course; and must be unpaid activities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS

Students may complete any number of activities, as long as those activities are from the eligible list of activities or has received written approval by the school administration prior to beginning the activity. Students will plan and select appropriate community involvement activities in consultation with their parents. A Completion of Community Involvement Activities form must be completed by the student, the student's parent (if the student is under eighteen years of age), and the community sponsor (that is, the person or organization that provided the community involvement opportunity for the student). The student must submit the form to the principal or other school contact upon completion of the 40 hours or at appropriate intervals determined by the principal.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents should provide assistance to their child in the selection of their community involvement activities. Parents are also encouraged to communicate with the community sponsor and the school principal if they have any questions or concerns. A parent must sign the "Notification of Planned Community Involvement Activities" form and the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form if the student is under the age of eighteen years.

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

One of the purposes of the community involvement requirement is to develop strong ties between the students and their community, fostering valuable and long-term relationships. Persons and organizations within the community may be asked by the student to sponsor a community involvement activity. Any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity should be provided by the person or organization. It is crucial that students are able to fulfill their community involvement requirement in a safe environment. The person overseeing the student's activity must verify the date(s) and the number of hours completed on the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form.

SCHOOL

Principals are required to provide information about the community involvement requirement to parents, students, and community sponsors. Principals are also required to provide students with the information and forms they will need to complete the community involvement requirement, including the school's list of approved activities from which to choose. After a student completes the 40 hours of community involvement and submits all documentation of their completion to the school, the principal will decide whether the student has met the community involvement requirement and, if so, will record it as completed on the student's official transcript.

PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have completed the required hours and submitted the necessary Completion of Community Involvement Activities form and/or supporting letters with the signature of their supervisor and hours completed to the Guidance Department. The school principal along with the guidance office will decide whether the activity has met the community involvement requirement. If so, the principal signs the form and the student's hours are input into Maplewood (student information system) and recorded on the student's Individual Student Tracking Record (ISTR) sheet. The completed form is then signed and dated by the Guidance Department and attached to the student's ISTR sheet. When a student has completed the 40 hours requirement for community involvement, this information will be indicated on the official school transcript through Maplewood. Any additional hours are accepted, recorded and input into Maplewood for possible Community Involvement scholarships/awards the student chooses to apply for. If a student has not completed their service and is getting close to the deadline for graduation, the Guidance Department will inform the student of this.

For students who have transferred in from schools outside Ontario and who do not have Ontario credits, but have completed Grade 10, 11 or more than grade 11, ten (10) hours per grade is allotted to that student, as pre-determined by the Principal and Guidance Head. Upon graduation the ISTR sheet is officially dated (student's graduation date), signed and sealed by the Guidance Office. It is then placed with the accompanying CCIAF's in the Documentation File of the student's OSR file for retirement.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Ministry of Education has developed a list of activities that may not be chosen as community involvement activities and that are therefore ineligible activities. An ineligible activity is an activity that:

- Is a requirement of a class or course in which the student is enrolled (e.g. Cooperative Education, job shadowing, work experience).
- Takes place during school hours, except during the student's lunch break or spare periods.
- Takes place in a logging or mining environment, if the student is under 16.
- Takes place in a factory, if the student is under 15.
- Takes place in a workplace other than a factory, if the student is under 14 and is not accompanied by an adult.
- Would normally be performed for wages by a person in the workplace.
- Involves the operation of a vehicle, power tools, or scaffolding (eg. snow blower, power mower, hedge trimmers, etc.)
- Involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure to other persons.
- Involves the handling of substances classed as "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (eg. asbestos, lead, dangerous chemicals, toxic materials, etc).
- Requires the knowledge of a tradesperson whose trade is regulated by the provincial government.
- Involves banking or the handling of securities, or the handling of jewellery, works of art, antiques, or other valuables.
- Consists of duties normally performed in the home or personal recreational activities.
- Involves activities for a court-ordered program (e.g. community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following guiding principles, read in conjunction with the list of the ineligible activities, are intended to assist the student and parents/guardians to determine whether a planned activity is within an approved area for the completion of the community involvement requirement:

- An event or activity designed to be of benefit to the community;
- An event or activity to support a not-for-profit agency, institution or foundation that conforms to the ethical standards of PCA and the Ministry of Education;
- Any structured program that promotes tutoring, mentoring, visiting or coaching, or whose purpose is to assist others who require the benefit of that assistance;
- Participation in an event or activity that supports ethical work of a global nature;
- Participation in an event or activity that promotes positive environmental awareness;

- Participation in an event or activity that contributes to the health and well-being of any ethical group that conforms to the community standards of morality and conduct, including school-based activities;
- Participation in an event or activity affiliated with a club, religious organization, arts or cultural association, or political organization that seeks to make a positive and ethical contribution in the community.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES OF INVOLVEMENT MAY INCLUDE:

Fundraising – includes canvassing, walk-a-thons, celebrity games, gift wrapping, gala events and sales for charitable purposes;

Sports/Recreation – includes coaching, helping to organize winter carnivals, parades and summer fairs;

Community Events – includes helping to organize special meets and games, and volunteering as a leisure buddy or pool assistant;

Community Projects – includes participating in organized food drives, or support services for community groups;

Environmental Projects – includes participating in community clean-ups, flower/tree planting, recycling and general beautification projects and activities;

Volunteer Work with Seniors – includes assisting at seniors' residences (e.g. serving snacks, helping with activities or portering, or participating in visiting and reading programs);

Committee Work – includes participation on advisory boards, neighbourhood associations and regional associations;

Religious Activities – includes participation as a volunteer in programs for children, child minding, Sunday School assistance, special events and clerical tasks;

Youth Programs – includes volunteer assistance with the operation of youth programs such as 4H, Scouts, Guides, drop-in centres, breakfast programs, March Break programs, Leaders in Training, summer playground activities and camps;

Office/Clerical Work – includes volunteer activity in reception, computer work and mailings for individuals or groups providing charitable or general community benefit;

Work with Animals – includes volunteer involvement with animal care, horseback riding programs, or volunteer assistance at a local zoo or petting farm;

Arts and Culture – includes volunteer assistance at a gallery, performing arts production or program, or in a community library program;

Activities for Individuals – includes any volunteer activity that assists someone who requires assistance for shopping, tutoring, light snow removal (no use of snow blower), housekeeping, writing letters or transcribing, or involves; hospital visitation, voluntary involvement with chronic care, or service as a volunteer reading buddy;

School Community Service – may include service within the school community that provides benefit to others that takes place outside the regular school day. The school Principal in advance of the commencement of the activity must approve these school-based activities in advance.

For more information: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/124a.html>