

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT MANUAL



2011/2012

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

What is Community Involvement?

- 40 hours of community involvement activities
- a requirement for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- a volunteer activity – not for pay or credit
- A constructive contribution to the community

Why has the Ministry of Education mandated it?

- Reinforces civic responsibility
- strengthens the community
- enhances one's self-confidence and self-image
- offers networking for future employment
- Provides an experience for students to include in their portfolios

When must students complete it?

- Any time during the secondary school program after the student has entered grade 9 and prior to graduation outside class hours, for example:
 - during lunch breaks
 - in the evening
 - on weekends
 - during school breaks
 - during the summer months

INFORMATION ON THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT DIPLOMA REQUIREMENT

INTRODUCTION

Effective September 1, 1999, every student who begins secondary school at the grade 9 level in Ontario is required to complete 40 hours of community involvement in order to receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The purpose of this requirement is to encourage students to develop an understanding of the various roles they can play in serving their community and to help them develop a greater sense of belonging within the community.

This document provides information on the Toronto District School Board community involvement diploma requirement for students and parents, as well as for the persons and organizations who are asked by students to sponsor a particular community involvement activity. If further information is required, please contact your local school. Students will select one or more community involvement activities in consultation with their parents. Selection of activities should take into account the age, maturity, and ability of the student, the location and environment of the proposed activity, and the need for any special training, equipment, and preparation. The safety of the student is paramount. It should be noted that students will not be paid or receive credits towards their OSSD for performing any community involvement activity. A parent is not required to sign a form or to be consulted if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Revision to Community Involvement Graduation Requirement:

Effective July 1, 2011, students will be able to start accumulating community involvement hours in the summer before they enter grade 9. This change acknowledges the enthusiasm of some students, with support from their parents, to be involved in their community prior to entering secondary school. Research shows that early involvement in community service helps students build a spirit of civic responsibility which can then be expanded as they move through secondary school.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL BOARDS MUST:

- Implement community involvement activities through their secondary schools
- Develop a list of approved community involvement activities in conjunction with local school councils, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the board's insurer
- Ensure awareness of the Ministry of Education list of ineligible activities
- **Not** approve student participation in any activities that are on the Ministry's list of ineligible activities
- Ensure that all participants, including students and community sponsors, are adequately covered by the board's liability insurance
- **Not** assume liability beyond 40 hours

PRINCIPALS (or designates) MUST:

- Provide information about the community involvement requirement to staff, parents, students, and community sponsors
- Provide students with the forms they will need to complete the community involvement requirement, including the board's list of approved activities from which to choose
- Determine whether the planned activity is on the approved list
- Give approval if the activity selected is not on the board's approved list (liability)
- Decide whether the student has met the community involvement requirement once the 40 hours has been completed and all documentation has been submitted
- Track hours on the report card & record the requirement as completed on the student's official transcript

PARENTS MUST:

- Provide assistance to their child in the selection of safe nurturing environments for completion of their community involvement activities
- Communicate with the community sponsor and the school principal if they have any questions or concerns
- Sign the "Activity Notification" and the "Completed Activities" sections of the passport **if the student is under 18 years of age**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENTS MUST:

- Before beginning any activity
 - In consultation with their parents, select an activity or activities from the board's approved list, or choose an activity that is *not* on the list, provided that it is not an activity specified on the ministry's list of ineligible activities
 - Complete the "ACTIVITY" section of the passport indicating the activity or activities that they plan to do
 - Complete the "LOCATION" section by obtaining the signature of the community sponsor (the contact signature at the bottom indicates the willingness of the sponsor or organization to participate in this initiative)
 - Sign the form under "ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION" and obtain signature of the parent (if the student is under 18 years of age)
 - Have the form verified by the principal or other school contact under the "ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION" to ensure that it describes an approved activity, etc.
 - Obtain written approval from the principal before beginning any activity that is not on the board's list of approved activities
 - Complete Activity
- After completing the activity
 - Obtain necessary verification signatures for the "COMPLETED ACTIVITIES" section of the passport
 - Submit the form to the principal or other school contact upon completion of the 40 hours or at appropriate intervals determined by the principal.

COMMUNITY SPONSORS MUST:

- Sign the student's passport to indicate willingness to sponsor a student **and** to verify completion of hours
- Provide any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity **(It is crucial that students are able to fulfill their community involvement requirement in a safe environment.)**

INSURANCE COVERAGE

LIABILITY

LIABILITY refers to being obligated or responsible according to law for property damage or injury to others.

The Toronto District School Board is pleased to advise our community sponsors that students who are volunteering are protected by the school board's liability insurance, while they are fulfilling their required forty hours of community involvement. Community sponsors are also protected by the board's liability insurance for claims that arise out of our students' volunteer activities. For example, if a student, in the course of his/her volunteer duties, causes damage or injures a third party, and these results in a lawsuit against the student and the community sponsor, the board's insurance will protect both the student and the community sponsor.

Community sponsors are responsible for ensuring that their liability insurance will protect them for their involvement in this program. As with other programs, such as "Take Our Kids to Work", the school board's insurance does not provide coverage for the negligence of the community sponsors.

The **school contact** that initials the passport to verify that the community involvement activities are on the approved list will not be able to supervise or monitor such activity. The Toronto District School Board and its employees, including the school contact, will not be liable or responsible for any injury to a student, or loss or damage to personal property as a result of a student's participation in the activity.

PERSONAL INJURY

PERSONAL INJURY refers to injury to the student.

Community sponsors should also be aware that, like job shadowing and other similar work- experience programs, students do not have accident insurance, or Workplace Safety & Insurance coverage through the school board.

It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance.

The school board expects the community sponsors to ensure that student volunteers are provided with safety instructions, and are trained and supervised to ensure a safe and mutually beneficial volunteer experience.

APPROVED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The following list of approved activities suggests types of activities from which students may choose. Other activities of a similar nature may be approved at the school level.

HELP YOUR NEIGHBOURS

- Provide service to seniors or to others who have difficulty leaving their homes – raking, shoveling (no snow blowers), shopping (students should not drive vehicles for this purpose), visiting, reading, meal preparation
- Assist a neighbour with childcare – take child to park, watch child while parent prepares dinner
- Tutor younger students – read, take to library, help with homework

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY

- Volunteer at a seniors' home/centre – visit, read, play cards or board games, take seniors for walks,
- make crafts
- Help organize local community events – food drives/banks
- Take part in environmental initiatives – cleaning and recycling operations, park cleanup, planting trees and flowerbeds (students should not use power tools – lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, wood
- chippers, etc.)
- Get involved in charitable activities – walk-a-thons, daffodil sales, canvassing for organizations
- Assist with sports teams – community leagues, parks and recreation programs
- Volunteer in *leadership* role with community groups – youth groups
- Volunteer in hospitals, libraries or any organization recommended by the Volunteer Centre of Toronto
- Volunteer with social service or animal welfare agencies – Red Cross, United Way, Humane Society
- Get involved in the democratic political process – scrutineering, canvassing, campaigning
- Offer service through religious communities/places of worship
- Assist with literacy initiatives – at local libraries, day care centers, community centers

HELP YOUR SCHOOL OR OTHER SCHOOLS

- Help with sports teams – run skills drills, assist coach
- Help in the library – shelve books, tidy up, change bulletin boards
- Tutor other students – help with homework, review difficult concepts
- Assist students with special needs – act as peer buddy
- Assist with planning of arts or athletic events – work on publicity, set up for track meets, sell tickets, check coats, offer technical support
- Facilitate school events such as parent information nights – meet and greet visitors, give guided tours, serve refreshments
- Assist with environmental activities – encourage recycling, plant trees/flowers, work on grounds crews (students should not use power tools)
- Participate in charitable initiatives – food drives, holiday drives for toys or food
- Sit on school councils, committees – school governance, be a peer mentor/mediator, help with orientation of grade 9 students

LIST OF INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The ministry 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 portion of a course, job shadowing, work experience);
- Takes place during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day. However, an activity that takes place during the student's lunch breaks or "spare" periods is permissible;
- Takes place in a logging or mining environment, if the student is under 16 years of age;
- Takes place in a factory, if the student is under 15 years of age;
- Takes place in a workplace other than a factory, if the student is under 14 years of age and is not accompanied by an adult;
- Would normally be performed for wages by a person in the workplace (students are not to replace paid workers or be paid themselves);
- Involves the operation of a vehicle, power tools, or scaffolding;
- Involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure to other persons;
- Involves handling of substances classed as "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- 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 student's home (i.e., daily chores) or personal recreational activities;
- Involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

HOW TO GET STARTED

- When you begin to plan, think about activities in your community, school or with an individual. Some ideas are listed below, but use your imagination. The list is endless.
- Check with your neighbours
- Inquire whether there are appropriate initiatives at school
- Contact your local volunteer centre for current activities
- Contact public institutions
- Contact Regional or Local Government
- Check volunteer opportunities in Guidance/Student Activities Departments
- Contact services/clubs to assist with some of their projects
- Contact local library and Information Centers for a list of agencies in the community

If a student proposes to undertake an activity that is not on the board's list of approved activities, the principal will determine whether the student's proposed activity is acceptable, in consultation with the appropriate supervisory officer. If the activity is acceptable, the principal must keep a copy of the approval on file. (The principal is not required to give approval of activities that are on the board's list of approved activities.)

MY FIRST STEPS

My Personal Start-up Plan

Things I should discuss with my parents:

People I can go to for help:

Action Steps:

*If you have any questions/concerns, please see Ms. Tsimikalis in the Guidance Department on the 5th floor.

**All information acquired through/from The Ontario Ministry of Education <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/>