

Questions and Answers about Community

Involvement

A brochure for students
and parents



- **in the school**, by helping out in non-credit extracurricular activities such as:
 - student governance; e.g., serving on Student Council
 - organizing school activities; e.g., grade 9 welcome, school arts show, sports meets, drama festival
 - assisting in school activities; e.g., Science Fairs, guide for Parents' Night, school prefect, fund-raising, technical crew for productions
 - participating in environmental projects; e.g., planting flowers, trees
 - participating in school/community activities; e.g., Students Supporting Seniors (if outside of normal school hours)
- **individuals in need**, by providing assistance such as:
 - activities involving seniors; e.g., helping to shop, reading letters, shoveling snow, hospital visits with chronic care patients
 - activities with young people; e.g., tutoring, transcribing, reading buddies.

For more information, please contact your local secondary school.

Examples of eligible community involvement activities

For your information, the following is a list of eligible community involvement activities. Other activities must be approved by the school principal prior to the activity.

Students can seek opportunities to help:

- **in the community**, by offering assistance to charities, service clubs and other not-for-profit organizations such as:
 - canvassing, walk-a-thons, celebrity games
 - coaching sports teams
 - helping to organize community events; e.g., winter carnival, summer fair
 - participating in environmental projects; e.g., clean-up, flower or tree planting, recycling programs
 - assisting in a seniors' residence by serving snacks, helping with crafts
 - participating on committees; e.g., advisory boards, school committees
 - participating in community services; e.g., United Way, local Food Banks, Meals on Wheels, 4-H Club

All students who begin secondary school in Ontario are required to complete 40 hours of community involvement to receive their secondary school diploma. This community involvement requirement encourages students to develop an understanding of the various roles they can play in their community and an appreciation for the value of community service. The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board supports this initiative, as reflected in the Board's Mission statement: "We educate our students to excel in learning, to succeed in life and to enrich our communities." We encourage all students to take advantage of the opportunities provided by this program.

How are activities selected?

Students search out and select one or more community involvement activities in consultation with their parents. A "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form must be completed by the student, parent and community sponsor. Lists of eligible and ineligible activities, provided by the Ministry of Education, are included below.

Students must submit their forms to the principal or school contact when completing the 40 hours, or at appropriate intervals, as determined by the school.

Why are some activities considered ineligible?

The primary concern in community involvement, as with all school activities, is student safety. The list of ineligible activities was developed in conjunction with the school Board's insurance carrier and prohibits the Board from allowing certain community involvement activities, out of concern for student safety. In addition, community involvement activities must be unpaid and not part of normal classroom requirements. Activities such as handling securities, the student's normal duties at home, operation of motor vehicles and power tools, and court ordered programs are also ineligible. In addition, students cannot perform the duties of a paid worker or apprentice to fulfill the community involvement requirement.

How will a record of completed activities be kept?

Record keeping is ultimately the responsibility of the student. However, teacher advisers are available to give students direction regarding eligible activities. A student portfolio is one way to organize "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" forms. The portfolio could be left with the teacher adviser and passed through successive grades.

Completed activity hours are recorded by the school as they are completed and submitted by the student. The information will be recorded on each student's official transcript.

What about insurance coverage?

The Board's liability insurance protects students and the community sponsors, because the program is mandated by the Ministry of Education. The Board's insurance, however, does not cover lawsuits that arise from injury in the workplace due to sponsor negligence. Though not required, it is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance. The 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.

What is the role of parents and guardians?

Parents and guardians should encourage their student to participate in community service, and guide the selection of community involvement activities. Parents also must sign the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" forms if the student is under 18 years of age.

Can community involvement activities take place in the summer?

Community involvement can take place during the summer, but since it is a secondary school diploma requirement, activities cannot take place before the student begins grade 9.

Hours can be completed in small amounts each year, or all 40 hours at once. They will be recorded on each student's Ontario Student Transcript when completed.

What are the expectations of community sponsors?

The sponsoring individual or organization is required to:

- provide a safe environment for students to complete their activities
- provide any training, equipment or special preparation required for students
- verify the date(s) and number of hours completed on the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form.

Can community involvement activities take place at home?

Community involvement must include service to the community. Duties normally performed in one's own home, for immediate family, or personal recreational activities, do not qualify as community involvement.

Community involvement hours are to be completed:

- outside of normal school hours; e.g., the student may complete the 40 hours during designated lunch hours, evenings, weekends, PA days, school holidays, including summer holidays
- in blocks of time most suitable to the student and to the individual/agency providing the opportunity
- preferably, by the month prior to the completion of the diploma requirements
- in not-for-profit, public or informal settings.