



Mandatory Community Involvement

**A Secondary School
Graduation Requirement**

Information Manual

Updated September 2005

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A Secondary School Graduation Requirement

Effective September 1, 1999, every student who begins secondary school in Ontario is required to complete 40 hours of community involvement in order to receive a diploma. The purpose of this requirement is to encourage students to develop an understanding of the various roles they can play in their community and to help them develop a greater sense of civic responsibility and belonging within the community.

This document provides information for students and parents, as well as for the persons and organizations who are asked to sponsor community involvement activities to assist students in meeting the diploma requirements.

Students will not be paid for performing any community involvement activity. These activities must take place outside of scheduled instructional time; they must not be part of a credit course including work experiences related to credits; they must total a minimum of forty hours; and they must be completed by the end of grade twelve.

The Upper Canada District School Board welcomes this opportunity to recognize the many contributions students make in their communities.

- Step ①** Students under the age of eighteen plan an activity in consultation with their parent(s)/guardian(s). The activity should involve service to others. The activity should be on the Board’s list of eligible activities.
- Students may begin to collect Community Service hours one day after the start of the school year.
- Students may not collect hours in the summer that spans Grade 8 and Grade 9.
- Step ②** Students confirm the details of the activity with the community sponsor.
- Step ③** **Before beginning any activity**, students complete **Part A and Part B** of the *Notification of Planned Community Involvement* form “*Planned Community Involvement*” (pages 6 & 7) and submit it to their school. The form must be signed by the student and by the parent/guardian if the student is under eighteen years of age. A principal’s signature is required if the activity is not on the Board’s list of eligible activities or if the activity involves community service within in the school.
- Step ④** Students complete their planned activity and submit **Part C** of the notification form “*Completion of Community Involvement*” (pages 6 & 7) signed by the community sponsor.
- Step ⑤** By **January 15th** and **June 1st** each year, students submit their *Completion of Community Involvement* records to their school for report card entry.
- Step ⑥** These steps are repeated until the forty-hour requirement has been fulfilled.

It is recommended that students begin to meet this requirement early in their secondary program.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

Students are responsible for selecting appropriate community involvement activities and for completing all required documentation as outlined in this manual. Students are also responsible for completing their community involvement hours in a manner that demonstrates:

- ⇒ Respect for others
- ⇒ Punctuality
- ⇒ Cooperation
- ⇒ Adaptability to change
- ⇒ Pride in work
- ⇒ Appropriate dress
- ⇒ Good use of time

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) assist in identifying and selecting appropriate activities that meet the requirements outlined in this manual. They are encouraged to communicate with the community sponsor or the school principal if questions or concerns arise. A parent/guardian must sign the *Notification of Planned Community Involvement* and the *Completion of Community Involvement* forms (pages 6 & 7) if the student is under eighteen years of age.

The safety of the student is paramount; therefore, prior to selecting a community sponsor, it is suggested that parents and students consider the following issues:

- Age and maturity match between student and activity
- Provision of health and safety training
- Protection from hazardous materials/substances
- Requirement of sponsor for a police check (fee involved)
- Policies, procedures, and orientation or training provided by sponsor of the activity to take place
- Personal Accident Insurance Coverage (page 13)

Roles and Responsibilities

School Boards

School boards are responsible for sharing information with students, parents and the broader community. Boards are required to develop a list of approved activities along with appropriate forms for students to use in documenting completion of community involvement activities. This information is contained in this manual along with a list of activities that the Ministry of Education has stated are ineligible.

A board cannot approve participation in any activities that are on the ministry's list of ineligible activities. Each school board must ensure that all participants, including students and community sponsors, are adequately covered by the board's insurance. Ineligible activities are not covered.

Principals

Principals are responsible for sharing information and documentation with students, parents, and community sponsors. They will also provide students with the forms they will need to complete.

The list of the board's eligible activities from which to choose is included in this manual (page 11). If a student proposes to undertake an activity that is not on the board's list of approved activities, the principals will determine whether the student's proposed activity is acceptable. If the activity is acceptable, the principal must keep a copy of the approval on file. Some activities may be ruled ineligible.

After a student completes the 40 hours of community involvement and submits all documentation of their completion to the school, the principal is responsible for ensuring that completed community involvement hours are entered on a student's official transcript.

Roles and Responsibilities

Sponsors in the Community

One of the purposes of the community involvement requirements is to develop strong ties between the students and their community, fostering valuable and long-term relationships. Persons and organizations with the community may be asked 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:

- sign the *Notification of Planned Community Involvement* form (pages 6 & 7);
- verify the date(s) and the number of hours completed on the *Completion of Community Involvement* form (pages 6 & 7).

Community sponsors should ensure that the activities completed by students are not on the Ministry of Education's or the Upper Canada District School Board's list of ineligible activities. This manual contains examples of eligible activities (page 11).

All eligible activities must be completed outside of scheduled class time. For example:

- ⇒ during the lunch hour
- ⇒ during "spare" periods
- ⇒ in the evening
- ⇒ on weekends
- ⇒ during school holidays
- ⇒ during the summer

Community Involvement Ineligible Activities

The Ministry of Education has developed a list of activities that may **not** be chosen as community involvement 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 time allotted for the instructional program on a school day. However, an activity that takes place during the student's lunch break or "spare" period is permissible.
- Takes place in a logging or mining environment, if the student is under sixteen years of age
- Takes place in a factory, if the student is under fifteen years of age
- Takes place in a workplace other than a factory, if the student is under fourteen years of age 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
- Involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure
- Involves handling of "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Requires the knowledge of a tradesperson whose trade is regulated by the provincial government (e.g., electrician)
- Involves banking or the handling of securities, jewelry, works of art, antiques, or other valuables
- Consists of duties normally performed in the home (e.g., daily chores) or personal recreational activities
- Involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program)

In addition to those identified by the Ministry, the Upper Canada District School Board has determined that the following are also **ineligible activities** and **may not be chosen** as community involvement activities:

- any activity that provides direct financial benefit or gain to the student or to the student's immediate family;
- any association with an organization or activity that does not comply with the policies, procedures and regulations of both the Upper Canada District School Board and the Ministry of Education;
- any activity that involves swapping of regular chores by two students;
- any activity that endangers the physical or mental well-being of students or those in their charge.

Community Involvement Eligible Activities

- 1) **Community Events** – includes organizing community celebrations (e.g., carnivals, parades, fairs, etc.).
- 2) **Community Projects** – includes participating in food drives or support services for community groups.
- 3) **Environmental Projects** – includes participating in community clean-up, flower and tree planting, recycling and general beautification projects.
- 4) **Committee Work** – includes participation on advisory boards, neighbourhood associations and regional associations.
- 5) **Work with Animals** – includes animal care, feeding, grooming.
- 6) **Fundraising** for community organizations, service clubs and charities – includes canvassing, walk-a-thons and sales for charitable purposes.
- 7) **Sports and Recreation** – includes coaching, organizing events or volunteering.
- 8) **Volunteer Work in Institutions** – includes assisting in hospitals, nursing homes and daycares (e.g., serving snacks, visiting, writing letters and reading).
- 9) **Youth Programs** – includes volunteer assistance with the operation of youth programs and organizations including drop-in centres, breakfast programs, playground activities and camps.
- 10) **Religious Activities** – includes participation as a volunteer in programs for children (e.g., Sunday School) and other church activities including special events and clerical tasks.
- 11) **Office and Clerical Work** – includes volunteer activity in the service of individuals or groups providing charitable or community benefit.
- 12) **Arts and Culture** – includes volunteer assistance at a gallery, museum, performing arts production or program, or in a community library program. This must not involve the handling of works of art, antiques or other valuables.
- 13) **Activities with Individuals** – includes volunteer activity for any person requiring assistance. This must not involve the use of power tools.
- 14) **School Community Service** – may include service that provides benefit to others and takes place outside the regular school day. These activities must be approved by the principal in advance.

No activity should be started until permission has been granted.

Insurance

There are two different types of insurance when discussing students involved in the Mandatory Community Involvement program; Liability Insurance and Student Accident Insurance.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance protects the student and the community sponsor **for claims that arise out of our students' volunteer activities**. The Upper Canada District School Board is pleased to advise community sponsors and parents that students who are performing their required forty hours of community involvement service for organizations are protected by the school board's liability insurance.

For example, if a student, in the course of volunteer duties, causes damage or injures a third party, which results in a law suit against the student and the community sponsor, the board's insurance will protect both the student and the community sponsor.

A list of eligible and ineligible activities is contained on pages 10 and 11 of this manual. Insurance coverage does not apply to ineligible activities or activities beyond the required forty hours.

It is expected that all community sponsors will:

- ⇒ ensure student volunteers are provided with appropriate safety instructions, training and supervision to ensure a safe and mutually beneficial volunteer experience.
- ⇒ ensure 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 community sponsors.

Student Accident Insurance

Community sponsors and parents should also be aware that, like job-shadowing and other similar work-experience programs, **students do not have accident insurance or Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage through the school board. It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance**, specifically if the student is not already covered by an accident insurance, i.e. a benefits plan through a parent's work. Every student receives a copy of the Student Accident Insurance form, distributed by Reliable Life, at the commencement of the school year. Student Accident Insurance is available for as little as \$2/student annually and covers incidental costs incurred as the result of an accident. If you did not receive a form and would like one, please contact your school's office administrator.

