

For parents and students...**WHAT IS IT?**

- ✓ a valuable experience for all secondary school students
- ✓ a requirement for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- ✓ a total of 40 hours of unpaid community involvement activities that are not part of a credit course
- ✓ a constructive contribution to the community

WHY?

- ✓ enhances self-confidence and self-esteem
- ✓ reinforces civic responsibility and strengthens the community
- ✓ provides networking for future employment
- ✓ allows students to create a portfolio of work experience and community involvement

WHEN?

- ✓ after the first day of high school
- ✓ outside scheduled class time
- ✓ during lunch breaks
- ✓ in the evenings
- ✓ on weekends
- ✓ during the summer months
- ✓ before graduating, preferably one semester before

It's your responsibility...

Parents and students should work together to find the right Community Involvement opportunity. So start early and become actively involved in this process!

GETTING STARTED**Step One****Planning Your Community Involvement Activities**

When *planning* your Community Involvement activities, you must be careful to choose approved activities that can be performed in a safe environment. It is important that you think about the following elements:

- ✓ your age
- ✓ your health
- ✓ your interests
- ✓ immunization requirements of an activity
- ✓ health and safety training
- ✓ the presence of hazardous materials
- ✓ the risk of harassment
- ✓ the need for a police check for specific activities
- ✓ the availability of guidance and clear instructions

Brainstorm with friends and family members. Make a *list* of activities that interest you and discuss them with people whose judgment you trust to decide whether potential risks or requirements for those activities are acceptable.

Step Two**Notification of Planned Activities**

You should notify your guidance counsellor of any activities you plan to complete. Your school *may* require you to fill out a form to

- ✓ indicate the planned activities
- ✓ obtain the required signatures
- ✓ return form to the school

The *principal's permission* is required if the activity does not meet the criteria for Eligible Activities on panel - 3 - .

Step Three**Supervision and Reporting**

When you have completed your activities, you may be required to fill out another form in your school. Your school may request a letter from Activity Supervisor. The letter should describe the activity, the dates, hours completed, and the name and title of the supervisor. Check with guidance to find out whether they have a form or prefer a letter.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**...OF SCHOOL BOARDS...**

- to share information with students, parents and the broader community
- to develop a list of approved activities
- to develop appropriate forms and /or processes for collecting and storing personal information

...OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS...

- to provide information about the community involvement requirements to parents, students and other stakeholders
- to ensure that students have the necessary information and forms they will need to complete the community involvement requirement
- upon graduation, to decide whether the student has met the community involvement requirements

...OF STUDENTS...

- to select an activity or activities that meet the criteria for eligible activities
- to obtain approval if the activity is not on the list of eligible activities
- to complete any forms and/or obtain any letters required by the school

...OF PARENTS...

- to provide any assistance to their child in the selection of his/her community involvement activities
- to communicate with the community sponsor and school representative if they have any questions or concerns
- to sign all the necessary forms if the student is under eighteen years of age

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following guiding principles, in conjunction with the list of the ineligible activities, are intended to assist students and parents or 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 the Board 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 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.

** Events or activities that may be based on or with a particular interest group must conform to the ethical and principled standards of the Board and the Ministry to ensure that they are intended to promote a positive contribution to the community in general.*

Where an event or activity does not clearly fall within the previously stated guiding principles, the parent and student may apply in writing to the Principal who has the discretionary authority to approve or deny such requests.

The following list provides examples of activities that, if within the intent and spirit of the applicable guidelines and ethical standards, are suitable for completion of the Community Involvement requirement.

- ✓ **Fund-raising** - includes canvassing; walk-a-thons; celebrity games, gift wrapping, gala events and sales for charity purposes and/or community benefit
- ✓ **Sports/Recreation** - includes coaching and helping to organize special Olympics, track meets and summer games, or volunteering as a leisure buddy or pool assistant.
- ✓ **Community Events** - includes helping to organize winter carnivals, parades and summer fairs.
- ✓ **Community Projects** - includes participating in organized food drives; or support services for community groups such as 4H, Christmas Tree of Hope, toy drives and clothing drives.
- ✓ **Environmental Projects** - includes participating in community cleanup, flower/tree planting, recycling and general beautification projects and activities.
- ✓ **Volunteer Work With Seniors** - includes assisting in a seniors' residence, e.g., - serving snacks, helping with activities or transporting, participating in visiting and reading programs, assisting with shopping trips to malls.
- ✓ **Committee Work** - includes participation on advisory boards, neighbourhood associations and regional associations.
- ✓ **Religious Activities** - includes participation as a volunteer in places of worship in programs for children, child-minding, special events and administrative tasks.
- ✓ **Youth Programs** - includes volunteer assistance with the operation of youth programs such as Scouts, Guides, drop-in centre activities breakfast programs, March Break programs, leaders-in-training, summer playground activities, camps, multicultural centres, Big Brothers and Big Sisters.
- ✓ **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, heritage sites, performing arts production or program, or in a community library program.
- ✓ **Activities For Individuals** - includes any volunteer activity that assists someone who requires the assistance with shopping, tutoring, light snow removal (no use of snowblower), landscaping, housekeeping, writing letters or transcribing, translation or interpreting or involves hospital visitation, voluntary involvement with chronic care, or service as a volunteer reading buddy, Meals-On-Wheels, assisting those with special needs.
- ✓ **School Community Service** - may include service within the school community that provides benefit to others that takes place outside regular class time. These activities must be approved at a local level by the school principal in advance of the commencement of the activity.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Ministry of Education and Training has developed a list of activities that may **not** be chosen as community involvement activities and that are therefore **Ineligible Activities**. The following defines Ineligible Activities.

- An activity that is a requirement of a class or course in which the student is enrolled (e.g., co-operative education portion of a course, job shadow, work experience).
- Any activity that takes place during regular class time on a school day. However, an activity that takes place during lunch breaks or a "spare" period is permissible.
- Activity that takes place in a logging or mining environment, if the student is under sixteen years of age.
- Activity that takes place in a factory, if the student is under fifteen years of age.
- If the activity 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.
- Any activity that would normally be performed for wages by a person in the work place.
- Participation in an activity that involves the operation of a vehicle, power tools, or scaffolding.
- Activity that involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure to other persons.
- An activity that involves handling of substances classed as "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- An activity that requires the knowledge of a trades person whose trade is regulated by the provincial government.
- Activity that involves banking or the handling of securities, or the handling of jewelry, works of art, antiques or other valuables.
- Any activity that consists of duties normally performed in the home (i.e., daily chores) or personal recreation activities.
- Activity that involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

INSURANCE

- Students and parents are encouraged to purchase Student Accident Insurance. The application forms are available through the schools.
- Boards expect that all community sponsors will provide students with appropriate instructions, put in place safety precautions, and train and supervise student volunteers.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is pleased to advise its community sponsors that students who are performing volunteer work for organizations are protected by the school board's liability insurance, while they are performing 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 organizations.

For example, if a student, in the course of his/her volunteer duties, causes damage or injures a third party, and this 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 will be responsible for ensuring that their liability insurance will protect them for the 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.

Community sponsors also should be aware that in the event of personal injury students do not have accident insurance nor Workplace Safety Insurance Board coverage through the school board. **It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase, at their own cost, student accident insurance available through enrolment forms distributed by the school each September.** 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.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Think about volunteer activities in your community, school or with an individual. If you have trouble getting started, you might contact:

- Volunteer Hamilton
267 King Street East
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1B9
(905) 523-4444
info@volunteerhamilton.on.ca
www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca
- Hospitals
- Seniors' homes,
- Charities
- Local government
- Service clubs like Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions

OR

- Check at the public library for a list of agencies in the community.

OR

- Look at bulletin boards in churches, synagogues, mosques, supermarkets, ...
- Check local papers

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

A Secondary School Graduation Requirement



**Information Guide
for
Parents, Students and
Community Sponsors**