

What types of activities are eligible?

Students are encouraged to choose activities outside of the school in order to benefit from a broad range of experiences. A list of eligible categories of activities has been developed by the York Region District School Board in conjunction with local School Councils, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Board's insurance carrier. A few examples have been provided in each of the categories to assist students in their selection of activities.

- **Charitable Organizations** – assisting with special events, programs, clerical tasks
- **Environmental Projects** – flower/tree planting, beautification projects, recycling projects, recycling depot
- **Animal Care** – volunteering in a veterinarian clinic, zoo, animal shelter
- **Community Organizations** – assisting with special events, food banks, community support services, shelters, clerical tasks
- **Religious Organizations** – assisting with programs, special events, clerical tasks
- **Political Organizations** – activities related to legitimate and recognized political organizations; municipal, provincial and federal political activities except during an official election period
- **Law Enforcement Agencies** – volunteering for activities sponsored by the police
- **Sports and Recreation** – coaching, organizing special events, assisting with projects/events
- **Health Agencies** – volunteering in hospitals, hospices, blood donor clinics
- **Senior Citizens** – assisting in seniors' residences, providing services for seniors in the community

- **Children/Youth Programs** – assisting with children/youth programs, volunteering in a child care centre or camp
- **Arts and Culture** – volunteering in galleries, libraries, community productions
- **Community Service for Individuals** – assisting community members in need
- **School Services** – peer tutoring, assisting with school events, student council, athletic council

If an activity does not fall within the categories approved by the Board, students must obtain written approval from the principal before beginning the activity.

Who should be contacted for additional information?

Secondary school principals and designated school staff will be pleased to answer any questions that students, parents/guardians, community members and sponsors may have regarding community involvement.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



The Ministry of Education policy document, Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999, states that every student must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. These activities may be completed at any time prior to graduation. However, only community involvement activities that have occurred following the start of Grade 9 apply.

Students under eighteen years of age must plan and select their community involvement activities in consultation with their parents/guardians. All required documentation must be submitted to the principal or to the teacher designated by the principal. When participating in a community involvement activity, students should demonstrate a positive work ethic and a sense of responsibility. Community sponsors will expect the following:

- punctuality;
- appropriate dress;
- respect for others;
- confidentiality of workplace information;
- willingness to develop new skills and to follow directions; and
- careful use of workplace equipment.

How Do Students Get Started?

Step 1 – Exploring the possibilities

Before selecting an activity, students should review the eligible categories of activities and the ineligible activities listed in this information guide. When choosing an activity, individuals should consider their interests as well as the needs of the community. There are many local organizations which will assist students in locating volunteer placements. Students may want to contact one or more of the following:

- service clubs;
- community agencies;
- libraries;
- community centers;
- local and regional government offices; or
- local volunteer centers.



Step 2 – Selecting an activity

In consultation with their parents/guardians and the community sponsor, students will select an activity from the York Region District School Board's list of eligible categories of activities. If an activity does not fall within the Board's list of eligible categories, students must obtain written approval from the principal before beginning the activity. Activities deemed ineligible by the Ministry of Education will not be approved.

Step 3 – Recording the selected activity

Before beginning the activity, students are required to provide the principal, or the teacher designated by the principal, with a completed "Notification of Planned Community Involvement Activities" form indicating the activity in which they plan to be involved. This form must be signed by the student and by a parent/guardian if the student is under eighteen years of age. Students must ensure that the form is kept in a safe place.

Step 4 – Documenting the completed activity

When an activity has been completed, the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form must be signed by the community sponsor. Students are required to submit the form annually to the principal or to the teacher designated by the principal. The date of submission will be determined by the school principal. Prior to submission, the form must be signed by the student and a parent/guardian if the student is under eighteen years of age. The form will be kept in the student's Ontario Student Record folder.

What are the Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians?

Parents/guardians should provide assistance in the selection and monitoring of the community involvement activities. However, they should not act as formal community activity sponsors for their own children. Selection of activities should take into account the following:

- the age, maturity, and ability of the student;
- the location and environment of the proposed activity; and
- the need for any special training or equipment.

Parents/guardians should be aware that community activities will not be supervised by York Region District School Board staff. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the community sponsor or the school principal.

What are the Roles and Responsibilities of Community Sponsors?

One of the purposes of community involvement is to develop strong ties between students and their communities. Community members may be asked by students to sponsor a community involvement activity. Training and equipment should be provided by the community sponsors or organizations. It is crucial that students fulfill their community involvement requirement in a safe environment. The person overseeing a student's activity must verify the date(s) and the number of hours completed on the "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" form. The initial training or orientation period should not be included in the hours recorded for the community involvement activity. The community sponsor may wish to provide feedback to the student in the

comment section of the form. Sponsors are advised that activities undertaken outside of the school will not be supervised by York Region District School Board personnel.

What are the Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards and Secondary School Principals?

School boards are required to develop a list of eligible categories of activities as well as procedures to collect, record and store student information related to community involvement activities. Information on community involvement must be shared with students, parents/guardians and community members. Principals may approve activities that do not appear on the school board's list of eligible categories of activities, in consultation with the Superintendent of Education. They are also responsible for storing student documentation related to community involvement in the Ontario Student Record folder and for recording the completion of the 40 hours on the student's official transcript.

Accident/Injury Insurance

Each September, a brochure outlining student accident insurance is sent home with students. Parents/guardians may purchase this insurance to cover students during school activities. While participating in the Community Involvement Program, students are automatically covered, with no cost to the parents/guardians, for medical and dental injuries not covered by provincial health care. The coverage is for the basic plan as outlined in the Student Accident Brochure and contains some exclusions and limitations. Because this coverage is only available while participating in the Community Involvement Program, the Board recommends that parents/guardians purchase Student Accident Insurance or other private coverage for all other school activities.

What types of activities are ineligible?

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 one that:

- would normally be performed for wages by a person in the workplace;
- 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 the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day other than during the student's lunch break or "spare" period;
- 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;
- 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 home, such as daily chores, or personal recreational activities;
- involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).