

Since September 1, 1999, one of the requirements for all students in Ontario is 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.

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
- develops new skills, enhances confidence, and builds esteem
- offers networking for future employment
- provides an experience for students to include in their portfolios

When must it be completed?

- any time during the secondary school program, beginning in the summer before they enter 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

How to Get Started

To begin planning, think about activities that may be available in school and in the community. Some ideas are listed below, however students are encouraged to be creative.

- check with neighbours
- inquire whether there are appropriate initiatives at summer schools/camps etc.
- contact your local volunteer centre for current activities
- for further suggestions about volunteer opportunities visit:
www.volunteertoronto.on.ca

What Else You Need to Know

- families must verify that the activity selected is in a safe nurturing environment from the TDSB approved list of activities. Only eligible activities will be accepted by schools.
- families are responsible for ensuring that the activity is from the approved list, and monitoring the completion of hours and the safety of their children.
- a signed verification letter, indicating the contact information of the placement, the activity performed, and hours completed, must be brought to the secondary school guidance department no earlier than the first week of October.

Fact Sheet

Community Involvement Hours (Grade 8-9 cont'd)

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The following list of community involvement approved activities for the Toronto District School Board provides suggestions of activities from which students may choose. Other activities of a similar nature may be approved at the school level.

HELP 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 child care
- tutor younger students – read, take to library, help with homework

HELP IN THE 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 flower beds (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 – act as a scrutineer, canvassing, campaigning
- offer service through religious communities/places of worship
- assist with literacy initiatives – at local libraries, daycare centers, community centers

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE

* The Toronto District School Board's liability insurance will protect the students and the community sponsors for liability lawsuits that may arise from the students' activities in this program. The board's insurance does not cover the sponsors for lawsuits that arise from their negligence or for student injuries in the workplace. It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance. The TDSB assumes no liability beyond 40 hours.

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 students' participation in the activity.