



COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT  
ACTIVITIES  
MANUAL

Updated June 2010

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Since September 1, 1999, every student who begins secondary school at the grade 9 level in Ontario is required 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.

This document provides information on the YMCA of Greater Toronto's community involvement requirement for students and parents, as well as for the persons and organizations who are asked by students to sponsor a particular community involvement activity.

Students will select one or more community involvement activities in consultation with their parents (and YMCA Academy staff). The selection of these activities should take into account the age, maturity, and ability of the student, the location and environment of the proposed activity, and the need for any special training, equipment, and preparation. The safety of the student is paramount.

It should be noted that students will not be paid or receive credits towards their OSSD for performing any community involvement activity.

## **What is Community Involvement?**

- a requirement for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- 40 hours of community involvement activities
- a constructive contribution to the community
- volunteer activity -not for pay or credit

## **Why has the Ministry of Education mandated it?**

- reinforces civic responsibility
- strengthens the community
- enhances one's self-confidence and self-image
- provides networking for future employment
- allows students to create a portfolio of work experience

## **When must students complete it?**

Any time during the secondary school program outside class hours:

- during lunch breaks
- in the evening
- on weekends
- during school breaks
- during the summer months

Permission is required from parents for students who are volunteering at community agencies. A parent is not required to sign a form or be consulted if the student is 18 years of age or older.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

When you begin to plan, think about activities in your community, school or with an individual. Some ideas are listed below but use your imagination. The list is endless.

- Check with your neighbours
- Inquire whether there are appropriate initiatives at school
- Contact your local volunteer centre for current activities
- Contact public institutions
- Contact Regional or Local Government
- Check volunteer opportunities through the YMCA
- Contact services/clubs to assist with some of their projects
- Contact local library and Information Centres for a list of agencies in the community

If a student proposes to undertake an activity that is not on the YMCA's list of approved activities, the Head of School will determine whether the student's proposed activity is acceptable, in consultation with the appropriate supervisory officer. If the activity is acceptable, the Head of School must keep a copy of the approval on file. (The Head of School is not required to give approval of activities that are on the YMCA of Greater Toronto's list of approved activities.)

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **THE YMCA WILL:**

- develop a list and implement approved community involvement activities
- ensure student/parent awareness of the Ministry of Education's list of ineligible activities and **not** approve student participation in any activities that are on the Ministry's list of ineligible activities
- ensure that all participants, including students and community sponsors, are adequately covered by the YMCA's liability insurance
- **not** assume liability beyond 40 hours

### **THE YMCA HEAD OF SCHOOL WILL:**

- provide information about the community involvement requirement to staff, parents, students, and community sponsors
- provide students with the forms they will need to complete the community involvement requirement, including the YMCA's list of approved activities from which to choose
- determine whether the planned activity is on the approved list
- give approval if the activity selected is not on the YMCA's approved list (liability)
- decide whether the student has met the community involvement requirement once the 40 hours have been completed and all documentation has been submitted
- track hours on the report card & record the requirement as completed in the OSR and on the student's official transcript.

**STUDENTS MUST:**

- in consultation with their parents, select an activity or activities from the YMCA's approved list, or choose an activity that is not on the list, provided that it is not an activity specified on the ministry's list of ineligible activities
- complete the "Activity Notification" section in this manual indicating the activity or activities that they plan to do before beginning any activity
- sign the form and obtain signatures of the parents (if the student is under 18 years of age) and the community sponsor (the contact signature at the location indicates the willingness of the sponsor or organization to participate in this initiative)
- have the form verified by the Head of School or other school contact to ensure that it describes an approved activity (More than one form may be submitted when additional activities are planned that were not included on a previously submitted form.)
- obtain written approval from the Head of School before beginning any activity that is not on the YMCA's list of approved activities
- complete the activity and obtain necessary verification signatures for the "Completed Activities" section in this manual.
- submit the form to the Head of School or other school contact upon completion of the 40 hours or at appropriate intervals determined by the Head of School

**PARENTS MUST:**

- provide assistance to their child in the selection of safe nurturing environments for completion of their community involvement activities
- communicate with the community sponsor and the Head of School if they have any questions or concerns
- sign the "Activity Notification" and the "Completed Activities" sections in this manual (if the student is under 18 years of age.)

**COMMUNITY SPONSORS MUST:**

- sign the student's form in this manual to indicate willingness to sponsor a student and to verify completion of hours
- provide any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity (It is crucial that students are able to fulfil their community involvement requirement in a safe environment.)

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Ministry of Education has developed a list of ineligible 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., co-operative education portion of a course, job shadowing, work experience);
- takes place during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day. However, an activity that takes place during the student's lunch breaks or "spare" periods 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 (students are not to replace paid workers);
- 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 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 student's home (i.e., daily chores) or personal recreational activities;
- involves a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

# YMCA OF GREATER TORONTO

## APPROVED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The following list of approved activities suggests types of activities from which students may choose. Other activities of a similar nature may be approved at the school level.

### **HELP YOUR NEIGHBOUR**

- provide service to seniors or to others who have difficulty leaving their homes - raking, shovelling (no snow blowers), shopping (students should not drive vehicles for this purpose), visiting, reading, meal preparation
- assist a neighbour with child care - take a child to the park, watch the child while the parent prepares dinner
- tutor younger students - read, take to the library, help with homework

### **HELP YOUR COMMUNITY**

- volunteer at a seniors' home/centre - visit, read, play cards or 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 - scrutineering, canvassing, campaigning
- offer service through religious communities/places of worship
- assist with literacy initiatives - at local libraries, day care centres, community centres

## HELP YOUR SCHOOL OR OTHER SCHOOLS

- help with sports teams - run skills drills, assist coach
- help in the library - shelve books, tidy up, change bulletin
- tutor other students - help with homework, review difficult concepts
- assist students with special needs - act as peer buddy
- assist with planning of arts or athletic events - work on publicity, set up for track meets, sell tickets, check coats, offer technical support
- facilitate school events such as parent information nights - meet and greet visitors, give guided tours, serve refreshments
- assist with environmental activities - encourage recycling, plant trees/flowers, work on grounds crews (students should not use power tools)
- participate in charitable initiatives - food drives, holiday drives for toys or food
- sit on school councils, committees - school governance, be a peer mentor/mediator, help with orientation of grade 9 students

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

The YMCA of Greater Toronto's liability insurance will protect the students and the community/sponsors for liability lawsuits from third parties that may arise from the students' activities in this program. The YMCA of Greater Toronto'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 YMCA of Greater Toronto assumes no liability beyond 40 hours.

The school contact who initials the passport to verify that the community involvement activities on the approved list will not be able to supervise or monitor such activity. The YMCA of Greater Toronto 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 student's participation in the activity.

**LIABILITY** refers to being obligated or responsible according to law for property damage or injury to others.

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is pleased to advise our community sponsors that students who are volunteering are protected by the school YMCA's general liability insurance, while they are fulfilling their required forty hours of community involvement. Community sponsors are also protected by the YMCA's liability insurance for third party claims that arise out of our students' volunteer activities.

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 law suit against the student and the community sponsor, the YMCA's insurance will protect both the student and the community sponsor.

Community sponsors are responsible for ensuring 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 YMCA's insurance does not provide coverage for the negligence of the community sponsors.

The school contact who initials the passport to verify that the community involvement activities are on the approved list will not be able to supervise or monitor such activity. The YMCA of Greater Toronto 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 student's participation in the activity.

**PERSONAL INJURY** refers to an injury to the student. Community sponsors should also be aware that, like job shadowing and other similar work experience programs, students do not have accident insurance, nor Workplace Safety & Insurance coverage through the YMCA of Greater Toronto. It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance.

The YMCA 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.



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLANNER

<b>ACTIVITY NOTIFICATION</b>	<b>COMPLETED ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>Student:</b>	<b>Student:</b>
Date:	Date:
Parent:	Parent:
Date:	Date:
Is activity on approved list?	Sponsor:
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Initials	Date:
Date:	Hours recorded on tracking sheet:
<i>If <b>not</b> on approved list, Head of School's Signature is required.</i>	Signature of School Authority:

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Description:	Organization
	Address:
	Phone:
	Contact Signature:
Estimated Number of Hours:	Date of Completion:

*The information you have provided is collected for the purpose of facilitating compliance with the community involvement requirement established by the Ministry of Education and Training Program and Diploma Requirements (1999) for Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12. The YMCA is committed to protecting personal information by following responsible information handling practices. We collect and use information to ensure compliance with education requirements, better meet your service needs, ensure a safe environment, and for statistical purposes. Questions about this collection may be directed to the Head of School, or for more information on our commitment to privacy, please visit [www.ymcatoronto.org](http://www.ymcatoronto.org)*