

Message to Families: RE Community Involvement Graduation Requirement 2020-2021

Subject Line: Community Hours Reduced for 2020-21

March 18, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

We are writing to inform you that the Ministry of Education has reduced the community involvement graduation requirement to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities for students graduating during the 2020-21 school year.

The Ministry has also introduced flexibility in meeting the community involvement hour requirements to reduce barriers students may face given the challenges related to COVID-19.

The following changes have been implemented for all Secondary Students in the 2020-2021 School Year:

- Schools may allow students to earn hours during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day;
- Schools may allow students to earn hours through duties normally performed in the home; and
- Schools may allow students aged 14 years and older to count up to a maximum of 10 hours from paid employment towards their earned hours. A reflection exercise indicating how their work contributed to the service for others will be required for students counting paid hours toward their graduation requirement.

Students should continue to seek out and accumulate community involvement hours in accordance with public health guidelines. Students are also encouraged to explore virtual volunteering. There are a number of organizations that provide virtual volunteer opportunities for students. Some of these volunteer opportunities can be found through agencies such as [Spark Ontario](#).

The following list provides some examples of flexible ways' students could earn community involvement hours in keeping with the purpose of the community involvement hours requirement, which is to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities, including:

- Providing tutoring and mentorship supports through:
 - Virtual tutoring to help students with reading, communication and/or other skills
 - Teaching online music or dance lessons
 - Hosting art classes for younger students
 - Assisting siblings and/or younger students with online learning and school
 - Connecting with and supporting seniors by:
 - Conversing with seniors virtually, for example, acting as technology mentors or providing a regular check-in to address isolation and build cross-generational friendships
 - Joining or creating a letter-writing campaign to seniors
 - Delivering groceries to elderly/immunocompromised neighbours

- Supports for families, neighbourhoods and community initiatives:
 - Supporting a family by walking a younger child to and from school
 - Participating in donation pick-ups for not-for-profit organizations
 - Coordinating a donation event with a local organization such as a shelter
 - Facilitating discussions with newcomer youth or families to help them learn about their new community
 - Sewing masks to donate to social agencies
 - Shoveling snow and/or performing yard work for a family or neighbour's family due to extenuating circumstances
 - Taking part in neighbourhood litter-pick-up hour

- Utilizing social media to connect with their community by:
 - Organizing a virtual reading or math activity for their feeder elementary schools
 - Creating a transition support video for Grade 8 students
 - Doing a musical performance that could provide entertainment for seniors
 - Encouraging people to donate through various social media platforms to food banks or other not-for-profit organizations
 - Creating a flyer for promotion on social media for a local cause

We recognize that you and your child may have questions regarding this information. We encourage you to please reach out to our guidance department or school administration to discuss your options.

Thank you,

Alyson van Beinum and Peggy Perkins
Principals
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