



# Community Involvement Handbook



AN ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL  
GRADUATION REQUIREMENT



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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides information for students and parents, as well as for the persons and organizations who are asked to sponsor community involvement activities to assist students in meeting the diploma requirements.

Students will not be paid for performing any community involvement activity. These activities must take place outside of scheduled instructional time; they must not be part of a credit course including work experiences related to credits; they must total a minimum of forty (40) hours (ten (10) hours per academic year); and they must be completed by the end of grade 12. Students may complete any number of activities, as long as those activities are deemed eligible and result in the completion of forty hours of community involvement (ten hours per academic year). The purpose of the community involvement requirement 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.

Students that join Merrick Preparatory School (MPS) from another Ontario secondary school are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of community involvement for every year they attend an Ontario secondary school (grade 9 – 12).

Students joining MPS from outside of the province of Ontario will be allocated ten hours of community involvement for every year, or five hours for every semester, that they did not attend an Ontario secondary school, starting in grade 9. For example, if a student did not attend an Ontario secondary school in grade 9 and grade 10, and then joined MPS in semester two of their grade 11 year, the student would be granted ten hours of community involvement for grade 9 and ten hours of community involvement for grade 10 and five hours of community involvement from semester one of grade 11, totalling 25 hours allocated to their community involvement requirement. The student would be required to earn an additional 15 hours (five hours in semester two of grade 11 and ten hours in grade 12), at a minimum, in order to graduate and earn the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Merrick Preparatory School (MPS) strongly encourages and supports all students to earn more than 40 hours of community involvement, regardless of when they entered an Ontario secondary school and regardless of when they joined MPS. MPS recognizes the many contributions students make in their communities.

## GETTING STARTED

Students may begin to collect Community Involvement hours one day after the start of the school year. It is recommended that students begin to meet this requirement early in their secondary program. Students may not collect hours in the summer that spans grade 8 and grade 9.

**Step 1:** Students under the age of eighteen (18) must plan an activity in consultation with their parent(s)/guardian(s)/Director of Residential Life or designate. The activity should involve service to others. The activity should be on the school's list of eligible activities. If the activity is not on the list of eligible activities or if the activity involves community service within the school, students must receive written approval from the Headmaster or the Director of Residential Life.

**Step 2:** Students confirm the details of the activity with the community sponsor. Students complete the "Activity", "Location" and "Date" portion of the Community Involvement Log Sheet before

beginning any activity and submit it to the school. The Headmaster, or designate's, signature is required along with the parent/guardian or Custodian, or designate, if the student is under eighteen years of age.

**Step 3:** Students must complete their planned activity and submit the Community Involvement Log Sheet signed by the community sponsor, the student, and the parent/guardian or Custodian, or designate, if the student is under eighteen years of age. By January 15 and June 1 each year, students will submit their Completion of Community Involvement records (Community Involvement Hours – Log Sheet(s)) to their school for report card entry.

These steps are repeated until the forty-hour requirement (ten hours per academic year) has been fulfilled.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for selecting appropriate community involvement activities and for completing all required documentation as outlined in this manual. Students are also responsible for completing their community involvement hours in a manner that demonstrates:

Respect for others

- Punctuality
- Cooperation
- Adaptability to change
- Pride in work
- Appropriate dress
- Effective use of time

## PARENTS/GUARDIANS/DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Parents/guardians/Director of Residential Life (or designate) assist in identifying and selecting appropriate activities that meet the requirements outlined in this manual. They are encouraged to communicate with the community sponsor or the Director of Residential Life if questions or concerns arise. A parent/guardian-Custodian, or designate, must sign the Completion of Community Involvement Form if the student is under eighteen years of age.

The safety of the student is paramount; therefore, prior to selecting a community sponsor, it is suggested that parents/guardian/Director of Residential Life and students consider the following issues:

- Age and maturity match between student and activity
- Provision of health and safety training
- Protection from hazardous materials/substances
- Requirement of sponsor for a police check (fee involved)
- Policies, procedures, and orientation or training provided by sponsor of the activity to take place
- Personal Accident Insurance coverage

## SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The school is responsible for sharing information with students and parents. Schools are required to develop a list of approved activities along with appropriate forms for students to use in documenting completion of community involvement activities. This information is contained in this manual along with a list of activities that the Ministry of Education has stated are ineligible. More information is available on the Ontario Ministry of Education website:  
<http://edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/124a.html>.

A school cannot approve participation in any activities that are on the ministry's list of ineligible activities. Each school must ensure that all participants, including students and community sponsors, are adequately covered by the school insurance. Ineligible activities are not covered.

## HEADMASTER

The Headmaster is responsible for sharing information and documentation with students, parents, and community sponsors. He or she or designate will also provide students with the forms they will need to complete.

The list of the school's approved activities from which to choose is included in this manual. If a student proposes to undertake an activity that is not on the school's list of approved activities, the Headmaster will determine whether the student's proposed activity is acceptable. If the activity is acceptable, the Headmaster must keep a copy of the approval on file. Some activities may be ruled ineligible.

After a student completes the forty hours of community involvement (ten hours per academic year) and submits all documentation of their completion to the school, the Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that completed community involvement hours are entered on a student's official transcript.

## COMMUNITY SPONSORS

One of the purposes of the community involvement requirements is to develop strong ties between the students and their community, fostering valuable and long-term relationships. Persons and organizations within the community may be asked to sponsor a community involvement activity. Any training, equipment, or special preparation that is required for the activity should be provided by the person or organization. It is crucial that students are able to fulfill their community involvement requirement in a safe environment.

The person overseeing the student's activity must:

- a) Sign the Community Involvement Hours Log Sheet form;
- b) Verify the activity, location, date(s), and the number of hours completed on the Community Involvement Hours Log Sheet form.

Community sponsors should ensure that the activities completed by students are not on the Ministry of Education's or the Merrick Preparatory School list of ineligible activities. This manual contains examples of eligible activities.

All eligible activities must be completed outside of scheduled class time. For example:

- During the lunch hour
- During “spare” periods
- In the evenings
- On weekends
- During school holidays, including during the summer (please review Ineligible activities, below)

## INELIGIBLE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Ontario Ministry of Education has developed a list of 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., cooperative 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;
- 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 (i.e., daily chores) or personal recreational activities;
- involves activities for a court-ordered program (e.g., community-service program for young offenders, probationary program).

In addition to those identified by the Ministry, Merrick Preparatory School has determined that the following are also ineligible activities and may not be chosen as community involvement activities:

- Any activity that provides direct financial benefit or gain to the student or to the student’s immediate family;
- Any association with an organization or activity that does not comply with the policies, procedures and regulations of both the Merrick Preparatory School and the Ministry of Education;
- Any activity that involves exchanging regular chores by two students;
- Any activity that endangers the physical, emotional or mental well-being of students or those in their charge.
- Any activity that takes place in the summer months or during school breaks that are outside of Merrick Preparatory School awareness or observation, for example an activity taking place outside of the greater Merrickville/Ottawa area, such as in a student’s home country where

verification of the community service and safety of the community service activity would be very difficult

### **ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT ACTIVITIES**

- Community Events: includes organizing community celebrations (e.g. carnivals, parades, fairs).
- Community Projects: includes participating in food drives or support services for community groups.
- Environmental Projects: includes participating in community clean-up, flower and tree planting, recycling and general beautification projects.
- Committee Work: includes participation on advisory boards, neighbourhood associations and regional associations.
- Work with Animals: includes animal care, feeding, grooming.
- Fundraising for community organizations, service clubs and charities: includes canvassing, walk-a-thons and sales for charitable purposes.
- Sports and Recreation: includes coaching, organizing events or volunteering.
- Volunteer Work in Institutions: includes assisting in hospitals, nursing homes and daycares (e.g., serving snacks, visiting, writing letters and reading).
- Youth Programs: includes volunteer assistance with the operation of youth programs and organizations including drop-in-centres, breakfast programs, playground activities and camps.
- Religious Activities: includes participation as a volunteer in programs for children and other religious activities including special events and clerical tasks.
- Office and Clerical Work: includes volunteer activity in the service of individuals or groups providing charitable or community benefit.
- Arts and Culture: includes volunteer assistance at a gallery, museum, performing arts production or program, or in a community library program. This must not involve the handling of works of art, antiques or other valuables.
- Activities with Individuals: includes volunteer activity for any person requiring assistance. This must not involve the use of power tools or heavy lifting.
- School Community Service: may include service that provides benefit to others and takes place outside the regular school day. These activities must be approved by the Headmaster or Director of Residential Life in advance.

### **INSURANCE**

If they have no other personal accident coverage, students/parents might wish to consider purchasing Student Accident Insurance. Brochures are at each secondary school. All Merrick Preparatory School students are covered by insurance while under our care, and service activities should be in keeping with insurance coverage.

It is expected that all community sponsors will provide students with appropriate instructions, put safety precautions in place and supervise student volunteers.

Merrick Preparatory School is pleased to advise community sponsors that students who are performing volunteer work for organizations are protected by the school's liability insurance while they are performing their required forty hours of community involvement service. Community

sponsors are also protected by the school's liability insurance for claims that arise out of our students' volunteer activities for organizations.

For example, if a student, in the course of volunteer duties, causes damage or injures a third party, and these results in a law suit against the student and the community sponsor, the school'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 their involvement in this program. As with other programs, such as "Take Our Kids to Work", the school's insurance does not provide coverage for the negligence of community sponsors.

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 school. It is recommended that students involved in the program purchase Student Accident Insurance. The school 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.

A list of eligible and ineligible activities is contained in this manual. Insurance coverage does not apply to ineligible activities or activities beyond the required forty hours.





# Community Involvement Hours - Log Sheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Community involvement hours must be completed outside of normal instructional hours, cannot be paid work, cannot count towards academic credit or be work that would otherwise be performed by a paid employee. Community involvement hours must be confirmed with signature, below, by a Merrick Preparatory School designate staff (usually the Director of Residential Life, Director of Academics or Headmaster) and the Guardian prior to the commencement of the activity and by the individual sponsoring the activity once the activity is completed.

Activity	Location	Date	MPS Staff Signature	Guardian's Signature	Hours Completed	Sponsor's Signature

MPS Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Hours Earned: \_\_\_\_\_