

March 2021

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HOURS UPDATE

As the school year moves along, please be aware of some important updates regarding community involvement hours for students.

The ministry of education has made temporary changes to the community involvement graduation policy for the 2020-21 school year in order to reduce barriers students may face and make it easier for students to earn community involvement hours given the challenges related to COVID-19.

For students graduating in the 2020-21 school year, the community involvement graduation requirement will be reduced to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities.

The ministry has also introduced flexibility for everyone in meeting the community involvement hour requirements such as:

1. Allowing students to earn hours during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day, or for duties normally performed in the home (e.g. walking a younger child to and from school, helping younger siblings with school work etc.)
2. Students aged 14 years and older can count up to a maximum of 10 hours from paid employment towards their earned hours. Students counting paid employment towards their graduation requirement will be required to complete a reflection exercise indicating how their work contributed to the service for others.

Students are encouraged to consider 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 and Volunteer MBC.

The following list provides some examples of flexible ways' students could earn community service hours:

- *Providing tutoring and mentorship supports through:*
 - o Virtual tutoring to help students with reading, communication and/or other skills
 - o Teaching online music or dance lessons
 - o Hosting art classes for younger students

- o Assisting siblings and/or younger students with online learning and schoolwork

- *Connecting with and supporting seniors by:*

- o Conversing with seniors virtually, for example, acting as technology mentors or providing a regular check-in to address isolation and build cross-generational friendships

- o Joining or creating a letter-writing campaign to seniors

- o Delivering groceries to elderly/immunocompromised neighbours

- *Supports for families, neighborhoods, and community initiatives:*

- o Supporting a family by walking a younger child to and from school

- o Participating in donation pick-ups for not-for-profit organizations

- o Coordinating a donation event with a local organization such as a shelter

- o Facilitating discussions with newcomer youth or families to help them learn about their new community

- o Sewing masks to donate to social agencies

- o Performing yard work for a family or neighbor's family due to extenuating circumstances

- o Taking part in neighborhood litter-pick-up hour

- *Utilizing social media to connect with their community by:*

- o Organizing a virtual reading or math activity for their feeder elementary schools

- o Doing a musical performance that could provide entertainment for seniors

- o Encouraging people to donate through various social media platforms to food banks or other not-for-profit organizations

- o Creating a flyer for promotion on social media for a local cause