



Do you know your teen must complete 40 hours of volunteer work to obtain a high school diploma?

Q Why does my teen have to complete 40 hours of community involvement?

A The Ministry of Education requires secondary school students to volunteer for 40 hours for completion of their high school diploma. Community involvement provides students with an opportunity to learn about their interests and discover possible career paths. Volunteering also promotes good citizenship and enables students to understand the role they can play in their community.

Q How will volunteering help my teen?

A Volunteering can help your son or daughter develop critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork skills in a supportive environment. Equally important, volunteering offers hands-on experience, knowledge of how organizations operate and insights into the realities of the workplace. Volunteering also exposes your teen to career options before they move on to apprenticeship, college, university or the workplace.

Q How much time does my teen have to complete the 40 hours?

A Students have the length of time they are enrolled in secondary school. This time period includes summer and holidays. However, students are encouraged to complete their 40 hours in the first two years of high school because of an increasing course load and extra-curricular commitments.

Q Will the school help my teen find a placement?

A While this is mainly the student's responsibility, the school will offer guidance, a list of appropriate activities, the Activity Record form, brochures and volunteer postings. The school will also record the completion of the 40 hours on your teen's official school transcript.

Q What activities can my teen do to complete this requirement?

A Ministry guidelines determine which activities are eligible or ineligible for the community involvement requirement. For example, an eligible activity is one that promotes environmental awareness or supports work of a global nature. Ineligible activities include working for family members, activities that would normally be performed for wages and any activity that is a course requirement. Examples of eligible and ineligible activities are available in the school guidance and career education office, in the "Your Time Counts" brochure and in the "Student Stuff" section at www.peelschools.org.

Q Where can my teen participate in a community involvement activity?

A Community involvement can be completed anywhere as long as the activity meets ministry guidelines.

Q How can my teen find out about volunteer opportunities in our community?

A Check out "Your Time Counts" at www.peelschools.org or visit www.volunteermbc.org or www.charityvillage.com.

Q How can my teen become a volunteer?

A Most organizations that accept volunteers have a staff member responsible for co-ordinating volunteer activities. Before choosing a placement, speak with the organization to determine if a position is available that is suitable for your teen.

Q Is there be an application process?

A As a volunteer, your teen will have to provide some contact information to the organization. Most organizations that have volunteers have a screening policy to protect both the people they serve and the volunteers. Many volunteer organizations use Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps program to screen applicants. The "safe steps" are:

1. Determine the risk.
2. Write a clear position description.
3. Establish a formal recruitment process.
4. Use an application form.
5. Conduct interviews.
6. Follow up on references.
7. Request a police records check
8. Conduct orientation and training sessions
9. Supervise and evaluate.
10. Follow up with program participants.

Q How are youth screened? Why is screening necessary?

A The organization will determine the appropriate screening measures based on the work to be done and the people being served. However, age and parental consent can be issues. If a youth is living with parents or guardians and is younger than 18, the organization may ask parents to provide consent.

Safety is important. It's an organization's responsibility to do everything reasonable to protect its clients, staff and volunteers.

Q What personal information can an organization ask my teen?

A Generally, the organization can ask your teen to provide the information needed to make a decision about whether or not to accept an application. The information required depends on the position.

Q How do I know my teen will be safe? Will my teen be insured?

A It's important for you and your teen to feel comfortable about the placement from the start. When you meet with a representative from the organization, ask about safety measures in place. Your teen may also want to volunteer with a friend. Take time to discuss the placement with your teen to ensure it is suitable.

Students are covered by the Peel board's insurance while completing their 40 hours of community involvement, as long as the principal has signed the *Notification of Planned Community Involvement Activities* section on the **Activity Record** form.

Q How will my teen keep track of his or her community involvement?

A All students will be provided with an **Activity Record** form to record volunteer activities performed during secondary school. When an activity is complete, your teen's supervisor will need to sign this tracking sheet. The completed form must be signed by you and given to the school to be recorded on your teen's school transcript. *Keep a copy for your records.*

If your teen loses the **Activity Record** form, a new one can be obtained from the guidance and career education department or downloaded at "Your Time Counts" in the "Student Stuff" section at www.peelschools.org. If your teen loses his/her signed record of community involvement, new signatures will have to be obtained. Without these signatures, the time will not be counted.
