

# Scholars Academy

## Community Service Learning (CSL)

### Guidelines for Teachers, Parents, and Students



#### What is Community Service Learning?

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an educational process, which enhances the quality of life within the school and the community. Community Service Learning combines instruction, 21st Century Skills, and voluntary participation in supporting activities or obtaining contributions of goods.

#### What Purpose does Community Service Learning serve?

*Service learning is a structured learning experience that combines community service with mentorship, preparation and reflection.* Students provide community service in response to community-identified concerns. Students learn the connection between their service and their academic coursework as well as their roles as citizens and professionals.

#### What are the benefits of Community Service Learning for Middle School Students?

- Students receive invaluable learning experience outside of the normal classroom setting.
- Service learning places curricular concepts in the context of real-world situations.
- Students analyze, evaluate, and synthesize these concepts using problem-solving skills, while at the same time helping their community.
- Students generate positive school-community relations and relations within the school.
- Students experience the joy of people helping people.

#### What types of activities constitute Community Service Learning?

- Activities which benefit the school or community provided that the community organizations benefiting from the services are non-profit, with the exception of hospitals, nursing homes, or educational activities.
- Activities which are not self-serving for a student or the student's family member.
- Activities which **are not tied to a grade** (i.e. - Musical performances with school groups to such places as nursing homes, will not count if the activity is tied to a grade in a class.)
- Activities which render service to individuals who cannot otherwise provide for themselves.

Some examples of approved CSL activities are participation in . . .

- service projects as a member of a service club or community organization.
- an elementary school, as a part of an **instructional program** approved by the principals in each school
- reading to the blind.
- volunteering one's services at a local hospital, nursing home, etc.
- volunteering one's service to individuals, i.e. senior citizens or the disabled.
- hosting outside groups for school festivals
- volunteering for the Board of Elections or political campaigns.
- tutoring (not paid); including tutoring done before or after school, during lunch, or study hall.
- outreach programs of religious organizations and other non-profit organizations, which provide service to the poor, sick, needy, etc.
- events, i.e., marathons, walks, races, which benefit **charitable organizations**.

Individual projects not specified in these examples may be accepted. Students are responsible for identifying and establishing service activities. **Check with the teacher if unsure.**

#### What Community Service Learning requirements does the Scholars Academy have?

- One hour of service credit will be awarded for each hour of service provided to the charity.
- In order to receive the Scholars designation at graduation, a student **must earn a minimum of 20**

**service hours** each year.

- **Six** of those hours may be earned through donations or contributions to charitable organizations. The remainder must be earned through service activities.
- **Up to ten (10) hours** may be earned each summer and applied to the first nine weeks hours.
- Students are encouraged to explore a variety of opportunities.

**No more than 10 hours should be earned at one location.** Exceptions may be allowed, but students should receive prior approval from administration.

**Activities that qualify for service credit MUST:**

- demonstrate volunteer, non-paid service.
- benefit an educational or a non-profit.

**Schools may establish criteria for school sponsored events as deemed appropriate.**

- benefit hospitals, nursing homes, or an individual in need.

**Activities that qualify for service credit MUST NOT:**

- be self-serving for the student or the student's immediate family member.
- be tied to a grade in any way.
- be tied to a class requirement/assignment.

**What procedures must be followed in order to receive CSL credit?**

1. Since not all activities are approved, students and parents need to be aware of which services qualify or do not qualify. Teachers can guide students on the appropriate activities.
2. Each student will provide the designated teacher with a signed CSL form, certificate, or other means of valid documentation which indicates the type of project completed, the dates of the project, and the amount of hours spent to complete the project. Such documentation will require the signature of the adult responsible for coordinating the efforts of the project. A parent signature will not be accepted unless the parent was the responsible party. All forms for a student should not be signed only by a parent.
3. As each project is completed, the designated teacher will provide a signature confirming credit for service rendered.
4. The designated teacher will review forms at the end of each nine weeks. A running total of hours will be shared with students. Any questions or discrepancies must be addressed within two weeks. This allows students two weeks after the end of each grading period to resolve discrepancies and turn in any missing documents. **Students will not receive credit for previous service after this grace period.**

**Quick Tips for receiving Community Service Learning Credit**

1. Choose the appropriate Community Service Learning activity/activities.
2. Perform the service project(s).
3. Submit a completed **Community Service Form** to your teacher. It is best to do this as soon as possible.  
***Make sure that all sections of the form have been completed.***
4. Verify totals on the back of the report card envelope. Any discrepancies or questions should be handled promptly.

**Check your Community Service Form to be sure the following information is legibly completed:**

1. date(s) of service
2. number of service hours provided
3. name of the person or organization benefiting from the service provided
4. description of the service performed
5. name, signature, and contact information (phone or email) of the adult supervisor of the service.