

STUDENT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Purpose

The Student Community Service Program is mandatory for all Pennington students. This program is an important aspect of the Pennington educational experience as it allows and encourages students to work toward a common goal of helping their community, both at Pennington and in the community at large.

Through the Student Community Service Program, students learn the value of helping others as well as sharing their unique talents and perspectives with those in need. Participating in the program teaches them that serving those less fortunate greatly benefits their community. It also fosters in the student the development of personal values, self-esteem, social responsibility, relationship-building skills, and self-confidence. As with all aspects of Pennington, the Student Community Service Program is designed to enrich the lives of our students by enhancing what is taught in school and extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community.

Definition of Community Service

Community service is defined as:

- Work done without pay for the benefit of the public;
- Donated product or service or activity that is performed by someone or a group of people to benefit someone else; and
- Work performed that is not typically expected of children as members of their family. For example, credit is not granted for cleaning one's room.

Acts of common courtesy and good citizenship at school will not be recognized with community service hours. These types of behavior are expected of all Pennington students.

Community Service Requirements

Participation in the Student Community Service Program is **mandatory** for all Pennington students. Each student will volunteer a minimum number of hours throughout the course of the school year and part of the summer, depending on grade level. The minimum requirements are:

1st – 3rd grade: 10 hours
4th – 5th grade: 15 hours
6th – 8th grade: 20 hours

Students are encouraged to exceed the minimum requirements. Community service hours may be worked at Pennington, or for other organizations in the community at large. For example, a student may assist a teacher at school, or may volunteer in a school, community, or religious community service program.

No more than one-half of the minimum requirement may be completed during the summer. Students and their parents should keep track of all hours served and log these hours into their agendas once the school year begins.

A student must participate in at least **THREE** different service areas. This encourages students to explore a variety of service opportunities.

If a student has not met the minimum required hours for his/her grade level, they will be ineligible to participate in Field Day or year-end picnics. Furthermore, he or she will have to return to their base school.

Students are encouraged to participate in community service projects that coincide with their interests. Potential areas of service include the following suggestions by the Presidential Student Service Award program found at www.presidentialserviceawards.gov:

- Community Improvement
- Literacy and Education
- Disaster Relief
- Public Safety and Violence Prevention
- Elderly Assistance
- Youth Serving Youth
- Environment
- Health
- Hunger and Homeless

Organizations within Prince William County that focus on these areas of service can be found on the Pennington website and may be contacted directly.

Recordkeeping

Adult family members are responsible for recording all of the student community service hours in the student agenda. Teachers are responsible for checking and initialing the service hour log. Teachers may designate an individual to enter the student hours into the database.

For box top donations, a representative of the School Rewards committee will be responsible for recording the eligible proofs into the school volunteer database and a receipt will be sent home with the student. Parents are to record and initial the donation in the Student Community Service Log located in the student's agenda. Students are encouraged to drop the donations in the collection box located in the office themselves, so as to eliminate as much work for the teachers as possible.

Community Service Progress Reports will be sent home each quarter. Parents are encouraged to help their children complete minimum requirements as early in the school year as possible.

Community Service Projects

Students may submit a school-wide community service project request in writing to the Assistant Principal for approval. Students may submit a grade level/classroom community service project to their classroom teacher for approval.

Suggested project topics and related volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to:

Animals and Environment

- Volunteer at animal shelter/pound.
- Volunteer in veterinarian's office.
- Participate in campaign for spaying/neutering pets.
- Help clean up parks, roadsides (with supervision).
- Participate in recycling projects.
- Participate in clean air/water projects.
- Participate in Earth Day/Arbor Day activities, plant a tree.

Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness

- Make meals/sandwiches for soup kitchens.
- Collect clothes, coats, blankets for the underprivileged.
- Participate in canned goods collection drive.
- Volunteer at soup kitchens (with supervision).
- Volunteer at homeless shelter (older children only).
- Participate in "Operation Christmas Child" which sends presents to underprivileged children in third world countries, or similar drives.
- Participate as a family or class in sponsoring a child in a third world country.

Health and Well-Being

- Volunteer at a dentist's office.
- Make cards for children in the hospital.
- Volunteer at a day-care center.
- Volunteer at a fire station or police station (older children only).

Intergenerational Projects

- Rake leaves/mow grass for an elderly neighbor.
- Take a meal to shut-in senior citizen.
- Visit a nursing home, read to or talk with resident(s).
- Make decorations for nursing home. Help a senior citizen put up holiday decorations.
- Do a living history report by interviewing senior citizens and reporting back to class.

School Service Projects

Suggested project topics include, but are not limited to:

- Help clean up grounds, halls, playground.

- Do errands for teachers.
- Participate in collecting soup labels, box tops, and other fundraisers.
- Read to or tutor younger children at school.
- School Donations - Hours may be awarded for donation of items to programs at Pennington or in the community at large.

Hours will be awarded for donations as follows:

Food Drives: One hour will be awarded for each 4 items donated, with a maximum of one hour awarded per drive. For example: two cans of food equates to one half hour.

Book Drives: One hour will be awarded for every 4 books donated, with a maximum of one hour awarded per drive.

Newspaper Drives: One hour will be awarded for each paper grocery sack of newspapers with a maximum of one hour awarded per drive.

Toy Drives: One half-hour will be awarded for every item donated, with a maximum of one hour per toy drive.

Clothing Drives: One hour will be awarded for every two items donated, with a maximum of one hour awarded per drive. A pair of shoes, for example, constitutes one item.

Monetary Donations: Monetary donations will not be considered as credit toward community service hours.

Labels and Box Tops: One- quarter hour of credit will be awarded for every 10 labels, box tops, or Tyson proofs sent in i.e., 40 proofs required for 1 full hour. These proofs should be sent in a sealed envelope or Ziploc-type bag. **Both the student and teacher names will need to be legibly included either inside the envelope or bag, or written on the outside of the envelope or bag.**

If a student works on behalf of a donation drive, such as helping to count and deliver donated goods or organizing a neighborhood-wide effort, their actual time worked should be reported.