

# COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

## INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

### BACKGROUND

#### INTRODUCTION

In 2007 the Community Service Program was implemented in all schools. As part of this program, students contribute a minimum of 20 hours service to the community, typically during Years 10 and 11. Completion of the 20 hours service is required to achieve the WA Certificate of Education at the end of Year 12.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) recognises the value and educational benefits of programs that enable students to connect with and contribute to the community. The Community Service Program gives students opportunities to contribute to their school and/or wider community as part of their school program.

The program aims to:

- develop a culture and ethos of service in secondary schools
- provide opportunities for students to exercise responsibility and develop leadership skills by solving real-life problems
- provide opportunities for students to learn through helping others
- recognise the contribution of students who already participate in service activities in their own time

Students participate in community service activities through the following options, depending on the school's organisation of their Community Service Program:

#### **Option 1: School-approved, parent-organised and managed**

These are service activities that are organised and managed by parents and approved by the principal. These are usually activities to which the student has an ongoing commitment that are undertaken from Year 10 onwards, carried out in the student's own time and approved by the principal. This is the category service to Girl Guides Western Australia fits into.

#### **Option 2: School-organised and managed**

These are service activities that are organised and managed by the school.

## **SERVICE ACTIVITY**

A service activity is an activity undertaken by students for the benefit of others but which does not attract any substantial material reward.

A service activity can be a single event or require a regular commitment over a period of time e.g. several weeks or months. It can be direct (attending a unit or event) or indirect (e.g. fundraising).

Service activities should:

- benefit others
- give service in an area of need
- provide opportunities for reflection and learning

## **PROCEDURES**

All parent-organised service activities (such as service to Girl Guides Western Australia) must be approved by the school principal or the Community Service Program coordinator before being undertaken. Community Service Students must also register through Guide House (form available from YPC Admin Assistant or on Guides WA website) so that our insurance cover is validated.

The school management process for this option must address the role and the responsibilities of parents. The Community Service Program coordinator must:

- inform parents and students of the aims of the Community Service Program and the options available for fulfilling the community service requirement
- provide parents with his/her contact details
- provide guidelines for parents and students regarding appropriate community service activities
- inform parents of their responsibilities and obligations including taking reasonable care to ensure their child's safety and welfare by considering the risks relevant to the:
  - environment
  - transport arrangements
  - child's capacity in relation to planned service activities
  - supervision provided
  - capabilities of the supervisor(s)
  - service organisations that host their child
- inform parents and students of the public liability insurance (PLI) requirements for service organisations that host students
- inform students of their rights and responsibilities when engaged in service activities as documented in the log book provided by the Curriculum Council
- collect information about the proposed service activity(s) as required
- gain parental consent for the child to participate
- check the proposed service activity(s) to identify any safety and/or welfare concerns with respect to the different needs of each student, the student's personal circumstances and the activity proposed
- recommend the proposed parent-organised activity(s) be endorsed by the principal

## PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE (SERVICE ORGANISATIONS)

Where service activities are undertaken in or through a service organisation like Girl Guides Western Australia, the Community Service Program coordinator must ensure that the organisation:

- is suitable to host students
- has appropriate occupational health and safety policy and procedures
- has the required level of public liability insurance
- meets the requirements of the Department of Education's *Criminal Screening policy* and the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (all Leaders with Girl Guides Western Australia have a *Working With Children Check and a Police Clearance*)

The Department of Education and Training requires service organisations that accept Community Service Program students to have Public Liability Insurance (PLI). PLI covers organisations for injury or death to a third party and/or loss or damage to the property of a third party where the organisation has been ruled legally liable.

Girl Guides Western Australia has the required minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

## ESTABLISH SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must ensure that the safety and well being of students is maintained at all times.

The School's Community Service Program coordinator determines the number of supervisors and the supervisory requirement and strategies. Supervisory requirements for service activities must be considered in accordance with the:

- age of the students
- experience and ability of the students
- student medical conditions or disabilities
- supervisor(s) competence and experience
- type of activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment
- the nature of the external organisation
- location of the activity
- weather (if relevant)

Supervision strategies must address the circumstance where students are not in clear view of the supervisor(s).

Where a service activity is with a service organisation, the Community Service Program coordinator must be assured that the organisation has:

- identified the person or persons responsible for the supervision of students e.g. the service organisation coordinator
- clearly articulated supervisory strategies

- introduced students to their supervisor and ensured that students can easily locate that person
- the contact number for the Community Service Program coordinator and parents, and an emergency phone number for each student

## **PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SEEK CONSENT**

Parental consent is required for all service activities. Information must be provided to parents to enable them to make informed decisions about their children's participation in a service activity.

Parents must be given information about any proposed service activity well in advance of the date of the activity. This information must include full details of:

- date(s)
- activities to be undertaken
- duration of activity(s)
- location of activity(s) (service organisation or other site)
- student contact arrangements during the activity
- transport arrangements
- supervision to be provided
- Community Service Program coordinator and service organisation supervisor action in case of student accident or illness during the Community Service Program activity
- liability for loss or damage to student property and medical costs incurred in case of accident or illness
- special clothing or other items required

Students participating in a service activity must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities for which parental approval has not been gained.

Parents must be reminded to provide information about any changes to their children's health or fitness prior to the service activity being undertaken.

## **COMPLETION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM REQUIREMENT**

Students must keep a record of their service activities and the number of hours completed. This can be done in the log book provided by the Curriculum Council for this purpose. Alternatively, schools may access the 'record of service' page from the Curriculum Council website to personalise, enhance or create their own service record. Schools must keep a copy of the completed record of service as specified in the Curriculum Councils Community Service Guidelines.

For more information about what a student's service record must include, please consult the Curriculum Council's Community Service Guidelines which can be accessed from the Council's website: <http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au>.

Student completion of the community service requirement will be reported to the Curriculum Council when appropriate.