Service Cord Guidelines

Purpose: To instill within students the important role that quality community service has in building a successful, growing community.

Requirements: The Service Cord is a distinguished service award available to Columbus Catholic High School students who earn at least 160 hours of community volunteer service from the beginning of their 9th grade year through May 1 of their graduating year. At the Senior Awards Program in May, recipients will receive a silver cord to wear on their robes at graduation in recognition of their achievement. Students moving into the district after the start of their 9th grade year may have hours requirements prorated.

Important details regarding the Service Cord:

Documentation: Students MUST document all service activities on the Service Cord - Award Form provided by the Columbus Catholic High School counselor – one form for each site or project, signed by a supervisor at the site. (A note confirming the student's' service signed by the supervisor at the project is also acceptable. It must be attached to the Service Cord - Award Form.) Service Cord - Award Forms can be submitted to the school counselor at any time during the year. There is no specific deadline for underclassmen to submit forms, although it is best to turn them in as soon as they are completed. Seniors should submit all Service Cord - Award Forms by May 1st.

Students may receive a copy of the Service Cord - Award Form from the school's website, a Theology classroom, or the school counselor's office.

Summer Service: Hours earned during the summer will be applied to the upcoming school year. Summer before 9th grade may be used to count towards 9th grade hours. It is recommended that all summer projects be pre-approved in writing by the school counselor. Summer service that complies with Service Cord criteria will be accepted even if students were not able to submit pre-approval forms. Completed forms should be kept by the student until they return to school in the fall. The school counselor is responsible for keeping students' Service Cord hours on file.

Acceptable Service Activities - Service Cord hours must be for providing a SERVICE or meeting a clear NEED for a:

- Non profit agency (NEIA Food Bank, Salvation Army, Hospital(s), Library, YMCA, etc.)
- Church - any volunteer position that benefits others
- School - volunteer position that benefits others and is not a class requirement
- Park - maintenance, restoration, etc.
- Charity program - mission trips, etc.
- Fundraiser - benefit for a family in need, Relay for Life, etc.

● Community event - if there is any question about whether a specific volunteer experience meets the criteria of “providing a service” or “meeting a need” students should get prior approval from the school counselor by submitting a Pre-Approval Form. The Service Cord Review Committee makes final determinations regarding service.

Examples of activities that would NOT be acceptable:
● CHS sports team managing
● Most CHS music program events (unless not a member of the organization)
● Concession stand or fundraising events in which proceeds benefit a CHS program the student is involved in
● Performing in musical, dance, or theater groups; unless related to a social cause or charity benefit
● Participation on committees in which focus is on one’s own leadership development and does not include outreach to larger community
● To satisfy a class or requirement by any agency, program, or organization
● Court-mandated community service
● For a relative
● For pay or compensation of any kind
● Travel to and from volunteer activities
● Any time the school is in session, unless pre-approved by principal and school counselor

Religious Service: Participation in worship services in encouraged. You may count the time you are involved in a liturgical ministry, such as lectoring, music, Eucharistic minister, serving, and ushering. Other examples of religious activities that would be considered acceptable service are: teaching Sunday School or Vacation Bible School, babysitting during religious services, and/or mission trips.

Appeals Process: All service/volunteerism hours are considered approved unless notified in writing by the school counselor. Students who wish to appeal for denied service hours must write an appeal to Service Cord Committee for consideration. Letters must include: name of student, date, documentation of service hours, name and phone number of person who supervised service, and reason for appeal. Submit all appeals to the school counselor.

Grandfather Clause:
● Class of 2020 - 120 hours needed
● Class of 2021 and following graduation years - 160 hours needed