



1130 Fifth Avenue  
Chula Vista, California 91911  
Office of Curriculum and Instruction  
(619) 691-5586

## Community Service Requirement

# A Guide for School Personnel

### **Board of Trustees**

Jim Cartmill  
Jaime Mercado  
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### **Superintendent**

Jesus M. Gandara, Ed.D

*The Sweetwater Union High School District does not discriminate with regard to sex, race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry/ethnicity, marital or parental status, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or any other unlawful consideration.*

*SUHSD Administrative Policy #2224*

## Community Service Requirement

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The Community Service Task Force, comprised of social science teacher representatives from all high schools and Granger Jr. High, meets regularly to review and revise the SUHSD community service requirement.

The Committee agreed that the intent of the requirement is to encourage students to be active and engaged members of their communities and to address important community issues. Service can unite neighbors, mobilize volunteers and encourage a lifelong ethic of public participation, and is best performed in conjunction with a reputable public service organization.

To these ends, the new guidelines for what qualifies as community service for the district graduation requirement have become more explicit. They are as follows:

- No pay may be received for service;
- No family members may be the recipients or supervisors of service;
- No credit will be given for extracurricular (co-curricular) activities or for student aide activities;
- No service may be performed during a student's school hours;
- No credit may be given for grading papers;
- No credit for service will be recorded without a parent or guardian's signature, both for permission and approval;
- No credit for service will be recorded without the student's History/Social Science teacher's signature of approval;
- It is highly recommended that service be in conjunction with a reputable public service organization.
- No credit will be given for work with a profit-making organization.
- No credit will be given for co-curricular activities, i.e., managing sports teams, participating in ASB, grading paper, etc.

A possible resource for community service can be found online at

[volunteersandiego.com](http://volunteersandiego.com),

though the Sweetwater Union High School District is not formally involved.

The Task Force has also developed a form for approving and reporting community service hours. This form must be used in order to give community service credit. **(See next page)**. It should be run on a single piece of paper, front and back

## Guidelines for Fulfilling Community Service Requirement

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SUHSD Board Policy #6404.1 was adopted in July 1999 requiring a minimum of 30 hours of non-paid community service to be performed by students as part of their graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2004.

SUGGESTED schedule for completion:

- 9th Grade: 6 hours
- 10th Grade: 12 hours
- 11th Grade: 12 hours
- 12th Grade: (As per university requirements)

- Students are encouraged to complete the required 30 hours early.
- New students who enroll from out of the district, will be required to meet only the hours suggested for the grade(s) they need to complete. For example, a student entering as a 10th grader will need to complete 24 hours, the suggested hours for grades 10-12.
- To ensure all students and parents are cognizant of this requirement, it is the responsibility of the site to send a parent letter home (see enclosed sample) and to make arrangements for ninth graders to receive this information during the fall of their ninth grade year.
- Social Science teachers at each grade level will be responsible for monitoring and verifying that the community service hours have been completed for each of their students. Teachers will submit those hours completed on the district-generated Scantrons they receive at the end of each semester. Teachers should keep a record of all community service hours submitted by students until those hours appear on the student's transcript.

## Guidelines for Student Volunteers

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1. **Schedule a Visit.** Making a visit to an organization that you are interested in volunteering for will give you valuable first-hand information on the type of services they offer and the environment you will be working in.
2. **Estimate a Realistic Time Commitment.** Take all of your schoolwork and other activities into account before scheduling the time you can give to the volunteer organization. Remember, it is easier to start small and add hours later than to have to break a commitment for hours that you cannot fulfill because your schedule is too impacted.
3. **Understand the Organization's Mission.** This will help clarify the goals of the organization and put into perspective the work you will be doing and help illustrate how even the smallest tasks help progress toward the organizations success.
4. **Request a Job Description.** This will clarify your responsibilities and the tasks expected of you as a volunteer and give you a clear understanding of what you can expect.
5. **Discuss Training and Supervision.** Find out how the organization will support the tasks and responsibilities of its volunteers by offering training and supervision.
6. **Seek Feedback.** Volunteering is a great opportunity for personal growth and will be valuable for job and college applications. Ask for a written letter of recommendation or evaluation.
7. **Expect Respect.** The success of many service organizations lies in their dependence on volunteer work and they highly value their volunteers. If, for some reason, you feel you are having a problem or are not being shown respect as a volunteer, please contact your counselor or supervisor.
8. **Be Enthusiastic.** Find an organization in a field that is of interest to you. This will make your volunteer work enjoyable and personally rewarding. Your social science teacher and/or your counselor can assist you.
9. **Keep Records.** Volunteers should keep photocopies of all Verification of Community Service forms for their own records during their four years of high school.

# Guidelines for Determining Eligibility of School-Based Community Service

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- Ideally, the act should be selfless: for someone's benefit other than the student's own. And it should not be something the student would be doing regardless of receiving community service hours (like band, sports, theatre, clubs, etc. – on or off campus). It should be in ADDITION.

- **Criteria:**

Is the activity in question servicing the community in which the student lives and works (or go to school), and not simply servicing the school or a class or an individual related to that school? Is the student really doing community service, or is the student doing 'school service' camouflaged as community service? How exactly is the student helping said community?

- **Guideline:**

When a student does something for a school band, for example, in a parade on Saturday, and it seems to NOT violate any of the NOs (not graded, off-campus, not during school hours), the question to ask is, "**Does the student have the option of not going and saying, 'I don't feel like performing today in the parade, or I don't care to go to this event?'**" If the student HAS the explicit freedom (with no repercussion or pressure) to NOT participate, then it IS voluntary. However, if a student MUST be there (even though it is not graded, etc., or mandated), then it is NOT voluntary. VOLUNTEERism is the core element. A student must make a viable CHOICE.

## Examples of what is **NOT** community service

- Grading papers
- Working for an individual teacher (or teachers)
- What would usually be considered normal extracurricular (or co-curricular) activities, such as sports and sports-related activities, cheer-leading, participating in school performance activities that are related to a class, ASB activities, etc.
- Work often done by student aides, such as office, teacher, or library aides
- Work during regular school hours
- The number of cans collected for a food drive, etc.
- Related to a class, credit for a class, or the making of profit, defraying costs of trips, etc.
- Benefits a business or individual employer

## Examples of what **IS** community service

- On-campus community service club activities (not meetings)
- Peer tutoring after school hours or on weekends
- Weekend campus clean-up, beautification activities
- Assisting/facilitating at school functions such as PTA or parent meetings
- Two hours of community service credit for giving blood during a school-sponsored blood drive (this is an exception to the rule that community service activities cannot be performed during school hours)

- **SAMPLE PARENT  
LETTER**

- **SAMPLE COMMUNITY  
SERVICE FORM**



Dear Parent (s)/Guardian (s),

The Board of Trustees of the Sweetwater Union High School District has approved a community service or service(s) as a graduation requirement.

Community Service is defined as volunteer service beyond the confines of the traditional classroom that fosters civic responsibility for the benefit of the community. This service is non-paid, non-graded and non-punitive. Through this service, students will develop skills, career awareness, and self-esteem. The intent of the requirement is to encourage students to be active and engaged members of their communities and to address important community issues. Service can unite neighbors, mobilize volunteers and encourage a lifelong ethic of public participation and is best performed in conjunction with a reputable public service organization.

To this end, the new guidelines for what qualifies as community service for the district graduation requirement have become more explicit. They are as follows:

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- No credit will be given for work with a profit-making organization.
- No credit will be given for co-curricular activities, i.e., managing sports teams, participating in ASB, grading paper, etc.

Contacts for community service can be found online at [volunteersandiego.com](http://volunteersandiego.com).

Students will be required to complete a minimum of thirty hours of community service before graduation. Counselors and social science teachers will discuss the guidelines, student responsibilities and verify completion of the community service requirement.

It is recommended that students begin completing their community service requirement in the ninth grade by completing 6 hours of community service; a tenth grade student 12 hours; an eleventh grade student 12 hours; and a twelfth grade student will complete hours required as per the university or college of their choice.

**Parents are required to sign their students' community service forms before the activity is completed as parent permission to complete the activity AND after their students have completed the community service as verification and validation that the activity was completed.**

Please contact the Counseling Office at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



**SWEETWATER**  
UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**COMMUNITY SERVICE**  
**VERIFICATION FORM**

**All Community Service Must Be Unpaid and Volunteer Work**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hst/Soc Sci Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed BEFORE the performance of the community service activity:**

**History/Social Science Teacher Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**AND**

**Parent Permission:** I, the parent of the above-named student, give my permission for my son/daughter to participate in the community service activity described below.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Community Service Activity:**

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Description of Community Service work: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Dates When the Above-Described Community Service Took Place and Validating Signatures:**

Date: _____	Time: _____	#of Hours: _____	Supervisor's Signature and Position: _____	Phone Number
Date: _____	Time: _____	#of Hours: _____	Supervisor's Signature and Position: _____	
Date: _____	Time: _____	#of Hours: _____	Supervisor's Signature and Position: _____	

**TOTAL # OF HOURS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To be completed AFTER completion of the community service activity:**

**Parent Validation:** I, the parent of the above-named student certify that my son/daughter performed the described community service at the times listed below.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**History/Social Science Teacher's Signature as Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples of Possible Community Service Activities:**

- Assisting at Boys or Girls Clubs
- Tutoring after school at an elementary school
- Helping at a hospital, convalescent home, or orphanage
- Helping with a community team such as AYSO soccer or Little League (helping with sports events of younger children, refereeing, etc.)
- Helping at a Key Club or community event
- Helping the community through church-related activities
- Working with the Habitat for Humanity
- Helping remove graffiti—off campus
- Working with community theater
- Helping at a non-profit organization such as St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, et.
- Giving blood (2 hours of credit each time blood is given)

**Additional suggestions and organizations are available at [volunteersandiego.com](http://volunteersandiego.com).**

**To qualify the organization must meet the Sweetwater District community service regulations.**

**Student must complete the back side of this form after completing the community service activity.**

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SUHSD Board Policy #2224

**NO**  
grades can be given for service; neither lowered, raised, nor as extra credit.

**NO**  
pay may be received for service.

**NO**  
family members may be the recipients or supervisors of service.

**NO**  
credit will be given for service during a student's regular school hours.

**NO**  
credit will be given for extracurricular (co-curricular) activities or for student aide activities.

**NO**  
credit for service will be recorded without a parent or guardian's signature for permission and approval.

**NO**  
credit for service will be given for work with a profit-making organization.

**NO**  
credit for service will be given for court-required or other punitive service

