

Service Hours Policy

*Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy
Revised June 2017*

Statement of Philosophy

The Theology Departments of Cathedral Preparatory School and Villa Maria Academy espouse the philosophy that community is the heart of Catholic education. This philosophy is not simply a concept to be taught but rather a reality to be lived. Based on the principle of solidarity, God calls all persons to build community in all areas of life. Education can best assist students respond to God's call by allowing students to experience community and reflect on its importance through service.

Community service refers to work people do whereby they learn the needs of the community and sacrifice their time to meet those needs through personal contact or advocacy without pay or other compensation.

General Requirements – All Students Will:

- Complete a minimum of 25 service hours each year, in the form of direct service to the communities of church, school, or society. Students who enroll after the beginning of the year will complete hours in proportion to their date of enrollment.
- Complete five (5) of the required 25 hours in specific service areas assigned by class:
 - Freshmen: service to the school and parish community
 - Sophomores: service related to justice for the young
 - Juniors: service related to justice for adults and/or children living and working in poverty
 - Seniors: service related to justice for the sick and elderly
- Document all service hours by using the appropriate verification forms and submitting completed forms to their theology teachers.
- Submit a summative reflection essay as directed by their theology teachers.

Other Policies:

- Service hours and the summative reflection essay are course requirements for the core theology classes. Students who choose not to complete either the service hours or the summative reflection essay accept a year-end failing grade (F) for their theology classes until the students complete both the service hours and the summative reflection essay.
- Because the service hours and summative reflection essay are requirements, seniors who choose not to complete the service hours or the essay will not receive their diplomas until all service requirements are satisfied.

- The theology teachers will include four (4) graded service hour checks in their course requirements. These graded checks will generally occur two weeks before the end of each quarter. The theology teachers will communicate the dates of the checks to all students at the beginning of the school year. Each check will require students to have completed a fraction of their service hours, thus helping students avoid unnecessary difficulties at the end of the school year.
 - First Quarter: 10 hours complete
 - Second Quarter: 15 total hours complete
 - Third Quarter: 20 total hours complete
 - Fourth Quarter: 25 total hours complete, including theme hours
- Other than the five class-specific hours (see above), students may use any qualified service to fulfill these requirements.
- Students may accumulate service hours for the next school year beginning June 1 of the current academic year. Incoming freshmen may begin accumulating qualified hours beginning May 1 of their eighth-grade year.
- Students may not submit service hours verified by their parents, stepparents, or legal guardians. These service hours must be verified by someone unrelated to the student (ex. assistant coaches and site supervisors).
- Students may use hours accumulated toward requirements for the sacrament of Confirmation as long as the activities fit the requirements of this policy.
- For long-duration events (one or more days), students may count only the time actually working on the service involved. For example, a student submitting hours from mission trips should count only the time spent working; time spent eating, sleeping, and recreating should not be submitted.
- For weekend retreat programs (ex. DME and Footsteps), students can claim a maximum of 30 hours of service for being a part of the retreat team. Participating in the retreat itself does not qualify for service hours.
- The theology teachers urge the students to ask any questions about what qualifies as service hours before turning in hours that may be disqualified. The teachers have the right and responsibility to disqualify any hours that do not fulfill the requirements and spirit of this policy and to amend this policy for the beginning of each school year.

Examples of Class-Specific Hours

Service to the school and parish community: school or parish summer activities; Vacation Bible School; parish festivals; helping teachers prepare their classrooms for the summer or new school year; Open House, Harvest Gala, Legacy Gala and other advancement functions; other activities serving or hosted by Cathedral Prep, Villa Maria Academy, the grade schools the students attended and the churches where they worship.

Service related to justice for the young: peer tutoring in grade schools; after-school programs sponsored by grade schools or organizations like the Neighborhood Art House; community-based (non-business) day care programs (NB: some day care facilities are for-profit businesses); activities supporting pregnant women and family life; pro-life activities in defense of children and the unborn; advocacy for reform to benefit children (issues include family life, education, health care).

Service related to justice for adults or children in poverty: volunteering in food pantries, soup kitchens, and clothing distribution; assisting agencies that support the working poor or children in poverty (ex. Saint Benedict Education Center, Mother Teresa Academy); assisting agencies that serve the homeless; mission trips to assist impoverished people at home and abroad; assisting agencies that serve refugees; advocacy for justice to the poor (issues include family life, education, housing, health care, welfare reform, and economic justice in the workplace).

Service related to justice for the sick and elderly: volunteering in hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice care settings; assisting agencies that provide shelter, health care, and dignity for the sick, elderly, dying, or deceased; supporting organizations that pursue personal wellness and cures for diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS; opposition to physician-assisted suicide and active euthanasia; organizing and supporting blood drives (not time spent donating blood) and organ donor awareness; advocacy for justice to the sick and elderly (issues include economic justice, health care [particularly elder care], and the need to prepare for elder care)

NB: The examples mentioned above do not form an exhaustive list; there are ample opportunities for service not mentioned above that meet the class-specific requirements. There are also opportunities that can be used to meet the general requirement even if they do not meet class-specific requirements. Even though given service hours may be counted only once, some service opportunities can be applied to more than one class-specific requirement (ex. volunteering for a church Vacation Bible School is both service to the parish community [Freshman] and service to the young [Sophomore] and could be counted either way). The goal of the class-specific requirement is for students to interact with members of the class-specific communities, to learn from those being served, and to reflect on our social responsibility for all people.

Excluded Activities:

- Any activity for which students receive compensation, whether paid or unpaid.
- Certain youth group activities that are required as part of being in the youth group.

- Any ministry offered as part of worship, including but not limited to: altar serving, extraordinary ministry of Holy Communion, reading, music ministry and hospitality ministry.
- Any work provided for a student's family members.
- Fundraising, unless the fundraising activity is part of a formal event organized by an appropriate agency that lets the students connect with people attached to or served by the agency. An example of excluded fundraising would be the door-to-door sale of tickets or goods, even if the fundraiser benefits an appropriate agency.
- Work rendered during a regularly scheduled school day, including the school-organized Outreach Day.
- Work rendered to any for-profit business or for non-profit entities that do not support the needy or advocate for justice. Businesses sometimes organize service events; students may count such events as qualified service after consultation with their theology teachers.
- Work done in the homes of private persons, unless such service is organized by a community service organization.
- Work done in support of any candidate for public office; students may count time spent working to support the voting process by participating in voter registration drives or by volunteering at local polling places, as long as the effort does not support a particular candidate or political party.

Revision History:

- 16 April 2012: Combination of existing Prep and Villa policies, initial publication.
- 07 May 2012: Clarification of graded check dates and hours earned for working retreats.
- 25 August 2016: TEC retreats renamed DME. Clarification of philosophy statement.
- 07 June 2017: Expansion of the definition of Juniors' special service to the poor.