

# Lakeshore Catholic High School

## An Explanation of the Cooperative Education Program

Students who participate in the co-op program are not guaranteed a co-op position or their first choice of placement. Students will interview with the Co-op Department prior to starting the co-op program to review choices for co-op placements. The Co-op Department will make every effort to find sufficient opportunities for co-op experiences for students; however, it is not always guaranteed that you will receive your first choice. The co-op process is competitive and the student's academic performance, skills, motivation, maturity, attitude, and employment potential will all be factors in determining whether a student is offered a placement and able to maintain a placement.

The Cooperative Education program is an opportunity for students to gain valuable on-the-job work experience for which school credits are earned. 220 hours of co-op work experience is related to 2 co-op credits while 440 hours of co-op work experience is related to 4 co-op credits. Co-op work experiences allow students to apply and refine the knowledge and skills they acquired in a related curriculum course.

The co-op course will consist of the **three** components:

### **I. Pre-Placement Orientation:**

It is **mandatory** that all co-op students must demonstrate an understanding of the pre-placement orientation expectations, as well as the related expectations in the compulsory Grade 10 Career Studies course. All students **must** complete pre-placement orientation for a **minimum of 15 to 20 hours which will prepare the student for the workplace**. (According to *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning, Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools 2000*) Students who are absent during pre-placement orientation will need to make up the hours and demonstrate comprehension and understanding of the material that was missed before they can begin their placement. Pre-placement orientation topics will include job readiness, health and safety in the workplace, rights and responsibilities in the workplace, labour unions as well as workplace orientation.

During this time, tests, assignments, information through class lecture, group work, guest speakers and worksheets will be provided for students. All information presented in pre-placement will be subject to a pre-placement test prior to students commencing their placement.

### **II. Integration:**

**A minimum of 14 hours** of integration throughout the semester must be allocated to allow students a time to reflect on their cooperative education experience and reinforce their learning in the workplace.

There are a minimum of four scheduled Integration days unless specified otherwise by the Co-op Teacher(s). Integration days include class discussions, lectures, guest speakers and integration related to student experiences at their placement as well as the presentation and/or submission of major assignments. There will also be assignments relating to co-op integration that must be submitted

throughout the semester. Students who are absent on integration days will need to make up the hours and assignments missed outside of their regularly scheduled co-op hours.

### **III. Placement Component:**

2 credit co-op – the student must earn a *minimum* of 220 hours comprised of pre-placement orientation (15 hours), integration (14 hours) and placement work experience (192 hours). 2 credit students should average 12 to 15 hours per week at their co-op placements in order to attain the required hours by the end date.

4 credit co-op -- the student must earn a *minimum* of 440 hours comprised of pre-placement orientation (15 hours), integration (14 hours) and placement work experience (384 hours). 4 credit students should average 24 to 30 hours per week at their co-op placements in order to attain the required hours by the end date.

**All students must attend their placement to the last scheduled day.** Under no circumstances will any student be allowed to finish before the last scheduled day, even if working to the last day means acquiring over the allotted 220 hours (2 credit) or 440 hours (4 credit).

Schedules may vary depending on the nature/location of the business and must be pre-arranged in cooperation with the employer, the student and the Co-op Teacher. (Note: Work hours can be determined by the Co-op Employer. For students doing regular day school credits, work time will not be past 5:00 p.m.)

### **How Placements are Obtained**

Co-op placements are obtained in one or a combination of the following....

- a) Student approaches an employer to request a placement – goes through a formal/informal interview at the work placement
- b) The Co-operative Education teacher in consultation with the student will begin the process of finding a placement. Teacher approaches the employer to determine if they are willing to interview a student, if yes, the employer contact information is forwarded to the student to setup the interview date/time

Upon completion of the interview the **employer** will complete a **Confirmation of Co-op Placement** sheet that will be returned to the school via fax or in an envelope with the student as well as an **Interview Evaluation Form**. The **student** will write out their answer to the following question .... **What were your thoughts on the interview and the placement? Why will this be a good placement for you?**

- The exact experience that the host company offers you will depend largely on the impression the student gives the employer (your initiative & enthusiasm) at the workplace. You must be flexible in your approach and be prepared to assist with tasks not mentioned in your PPLP if needed.
- Failure to attend a pre-arranged interview without good reason or notification within 48 hours may mean that you are withdrawn from the program.
- You must keep a current address, telephone number and E-mail address on file with the Co-op teacher.

- Prepare for the interview by researching the employer. Bring an up to date cover letter and resume with you to your co-op interview.
- You must provide accurate information, concerning his/her academic record and interests, on any forms requested by the employer
- Honour the acceptance of the offer as a contractual agreement with the employer. Contract dates must be completed as agreed upon and will be indicated on the Worker Education Agreement (WEA).
- NOT accept more than one placement offer and
- NOT continue to take interviews after he/she has accepted an offer.

### **Once Accepted What Happens**

Once accepted at a co-op placement you **CANNOT** renege upon an accepted offer. Once an offer is accepted the student must complete the agreement until the end of the semester. Placement changes will NOT occur without consultation of the Co-op teacher, Guidance & Administration.

### **Attendance**

The student is required to report to their Co-op Placement each and every school day according to the pre-arranged times agreed upon by the employer, the student and the school. If the student is absent from Co-op they are required to notify the school and the employer in advance if possible or by telephone on the day of their absence. If the student does not sign in/out at the co-op office they will also be marked truant. Habitual absenteeism could also result in the student being terminated from their co-op placement.

### **Transportation**

Transportation is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent and/or guardian. In extraordinary circumstances, where problems with financing transportation prohibit a student from participating in Co-op, students should speak to their Co-op teacher about completing a transportation subsidy form. This is done on an individual basis through the Co-op Department; however, final approval is done on a Board level. Students must also be aware that completion of the application does not mean they will be approved.

### **How to Get Started**

Students interested in applying to a Co-op should see a member of the Guidance team or speak to the Co-op Teacher and fill out the **Cooperative Education Application Form**