St. Brendan High School

Community Service Learning Program

Updated on June 1, 2026 for the 2026-2027 Academic Year

I. Mission

- In the Archdiocese of Miami, Catholic schools provide service to those in need at the school, church, state, and national levels. In order to fulfill the mission of forming disciples, the necessary elements of teaching Catholic values and reflection on the impact of the activity need to be combined with the action of serving the community. Schools have these three components as part of the school program, but often they are done in isolation. When these components are linked together in a Community Service Learning Program, the students are provided an opportunity to take action and reflect upon the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy that have been incorporated into their instruction.

- The connection of the elements of instruction, action and reflection requires the students to not just recall the information but to use the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The experience of serving the community after receiving the background information in school is internalized through the reflection.

- A Community Service Learning Program focuses on the mission and philosophy of the school by providing the framework for the students to integrate Catholic values with a service activity and a reflection process. The constructivist theory of learning contends that knowledge is constructed as people draw upon their prior knowledge and experiences to process, interpret and negotiate the meaning of new information within the social context of their environments; therefore, activities should be designed to connect the students to their communities.

- In its Pastoral Message on Catholic Education, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that "the experience of Christian community leads naturally to service."

- Pope Francis reminded the Church: "We have to avoid the spiritual sickness of a self-referential church." In other words, the Pope reminded us all of the importance of reaching out of our comfort zones, to help others in the peripheries of our society, especially those with special needs.

- St. Brendan High School's Community Service Learning Program is intended not simply as an exercise in the satisfaction of a certain number of hours of service to the community, but rather is intended to help students learn from that service in a real and meaningful way, and grow in their faith.

II. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy; Care for Creation

Any service activity in which a student wishes to engage must directly correlate to one of the Corporal Works of Mercy, one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy or Care for Creation.

Corporal Works of Mercy

- **Feed the hungry**
- **Give drink to the thirsty**
- **Clothe the naked**
- **Give shelter to the homeless**
- **Visit the sick**
- **Visit the imprisoned**
- **Bury the dead**

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- **Counseling the doubtful**
- **Instruct the unaware**
- **Comforting the sorrowful**

- **Care for Creation (Environmental/Animals)**

III. Requirements

- Students will need a total of at least **100 COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING (CSL) HOURS** in order to graduate from St. Brendan High School.

- A total of at least **25 CSL HOURS MUST BE COMPLETED EACH YEAR IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE PROJECT REQUIREMENT IN THEOLOGY CLASS.**

    - **Direct Service** – At least **10** of the 25 yearly CSL hours **MUST** be completed as **DIRECT** service. **Direct service means in-person, person-to-person, directly serving the special needs person being served by the mission of the organization (e.g. If you are serving at a school, then direct service would have to include specifically working with students)**. Naturally, you may choose to complete all of your yearly hours through direct service. **All parish hours count as direct service, with the exception of collection/donation drives**. Please be sure to apply these hours using the GOAL labeled "Direct Service" on x2VOL.

    - **Indirect Service** – Although all CSL hours can be completed through DIRECT service, no more than **15** of the 25 yearly CSL hours **CAN** be completed through **INDIRECT** service. **Walks, in addition to other service that does not put you in direct contact with the special needs person being served by the mission of the organization, count as indirect service**. Please be sure to apply these hours using the GOAL labeled "Indirect Service" on x2VOL.

        - **Collection/donation drives of any kind and at any location are considered INDIRECT hours and have a 10-hour cap (in total for the academic year)**. Please be sure to submit them using the GOAL labeled "Donation Drives" on x2VOL.

- **All Care for Creation (Environmental/Animals) CSL hours are considered INDIRECT hours.**

- In the second semester, students must present a project outlining their community service learning experience in conjunction with the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. The oral presentation will be given during 4th Quarter of every school year in their Theology Class for a test grade in order to satisfy the community service learning requirement.

- Please Carefully Note: The CSL Program is an essential component to our theology program. Failure to meet final deadlines will jeopardize the student's eligibility for graduation.

IV. Guidelines and Procedures

- Students are responsible for verifying non-profit status before engaging in any service in the community. During the academic year, should a student have a doubt about the aforementioned, they should email Mr. Caballero (Freshmen and Sophomores – jcaballero@stbhs.org) or Ms. Alvarez (Juniors and Seniors – ralvarez@stbhs.org).

- All community service hours are to be completed in service to those who have special needs through a non-profit organization. The organization for which you provide service must not be in conflict with the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Miami, and St. Brendan High School. For an example of some exclusions, please refer to https://www.miamiarch.org/Atimo_s/news/ProvincePolicyCG.pdf.

- The community service we are referring to **may not include** the following:

    - Fundraising
    - Work for which a student is paid and/or compensated in any way
    - Working for a private business or organization that files as a for-profit including some hospitals
    - Activities that assist your family
    - Babysitting, cleaning house, doing a neighbor's yard work, working in a parent's office
    - Political campaigning
    - Work for any private practice
    - Clerical/office work
    - Internships

- Walks – Students will not receive CSL hour credit for any money raised, time raising money or for hours walked. A student may receive INDIRECT CSL hours for service done during the walk such as face painting for children, operating a booth, setting up and removing said booth, etc. The walk must support a non-profit organization in line with the values and beliefs of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Miami, and St. Brendan High School. Credit will not be given for solely participating in the walk, but only service (work) done at the walk.

- Parish and Archdiocesan/Catholic Ministries – With the exception of collection/donation drives that count as INDIRECT CSL, students may do all 25 of their required hours through official ministries of the Archdiocese of Miami including parish liturgical ministries such as altar serving, reading, or ushering as well as volunteering at parish carnivals, etc.

V. Documentation of Hours

- Students must submit all service hours through x2VOL. It is the responsibility of each student to fill in all required fields for each submission and make the appropriate selection of the "goal" (direct or indirect) that qualifies. Submissions that are incomplete or fail to contain required documentation will be denied. It is the responsibility of each student to follow up and make appropriate changes to the submission. After a submission is reviewed, an email will automatically be generated and sent to the student stating whether service was approved, partially approved, or denied; said email will also explain the reason why a particular submission was either partially approved or denied. If the service has been partially approved or denied, it is the responsibility of the student to follow up with Mr. Caballero or Ms. Alvarez for any clarifications in a timely manner. Students must resolve issues with documentation ahead of the deadline with enough time for Mr. Caballero or Ms. Alvarez to review the submission. **Please note: No late submissions will be accepted after the deadline**. Students are responsible for the monitoring of their own service hours records via x2VOL by logging in and checking the "dashboard" on a regular basis. Additionally, students must check their emails regularly and their CSL Theology Project grade in the fourth quarter.

- **Please note: The deadline for the Class of 2027 (Seniors) will be on Thursday, March 11, 2027.**

- **Please note**: **The deadline for CSL hours and projects for the Classes of 2028 (Juniors), 2029 (Sophomores) and 2030 (Freshmen) will be on Friday, April 9, 2027.**

- Students are encouraged to keep copies of all submissions for their own records.

- Any community service performed with a non-profit organization must also be verified on the organization's letterhead, be completely filled out (only originals will be accepted) and include the following:

    - Student's name
    - Date(s)/ time(s) of service,
    - Activity performed,
    - Supervisor's name and position,
    - Phone number,
    - E-mail address
    - Signature.

- It is imperative that students document and submit all service hours they complete through x2VOL while at St. Brendan High School.

- Students need to be sure that organizations at which they serve are willing to give them proper documentation before they volunteer there and that they receive it in-hand before they leave or have a reasonable assurance that it will be sent in a timely manner.

- No student will receive credit for "doubled/extra" hours or hours deemed to be excessive or irregular based on the service performed; one hour of credit will be given for one hour served. St. Brendan High will make the final determination regarding this matter.

VI. Transfer Students

- A student who transfers into St. Brendan High School is in no way excused from the 25 hour per year and 100 hours before graduation requirements. If the transfer student DOCUMENTED hours at their previous school, those hours may be approved and credited toward their 100 hour before graduation requirement. Unless the transfer student completed all 100 hours AND there is approved documentation from their previous school, they will still have to perform 25 hours of community service each year they are a student at St. Brendan High School. In the case where the 100 hours have been completed, documented AND approved, said student will be required to do 10 hours of service each year they are a student of St. Brendan High School.

VII. Checking Non-Profit Status

- St. Brendan High School will recognize the non-profit status of any organization that has been granted **Florida Non-Profit Corporation** status by the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.
    - **Online Tool For Checking Florida Non-Profit Corporation Status**
      Students can check to see if an organization is recognized as a Florida Non-Profit Corporation by using the online search tool provided by the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations: http://search.sunbiz.org/Inquiry/CorporationSearch/ByName**.** If an organization is a Florida Non-Profit, that label will appear at the top of the search result.

VIII. Interpretation and Enforcement of Policies

- Students and parents agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Community Service Learning Guidelines Document. Students and parents also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies, including those connected to the Community Service Learning Program. Moreover, students and parents further understand that all of the school's policies, whether written or verbal, are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.