



# **SILVER CORD**

## **2024-25 HANDBOOK**



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## **CONTACT**

Kathleen O'Brien, Silver Cord Program Supervisor  
 silvercord@waukeeschools.org  
 WHS 515-987-5163, Ext. 20039  
 NWHS 515-987-5181, Ext. 20039

Office Location: WHS - Main Office and NWHS - Activities Office  
 School year hours: NWHS - Tuesday, 8 am - 2 pm and WHS - Wednesday, 8 am - 2 pm  
 Summer: please email for an appointment

waukeesilvercord.org

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Silver Cord Program is to instill within students the importance of community service and encourage students to be accountable for investing in their own education and in the community on a regular basis during their school years.

## **Starting the Program**

Students are eligible to earn Silver Cord hours beginning **June 1st of their 9th grade year**. Students can begin tracking volunteer hours at any time during their high school career. There is no requirement to earn a specific number of hours each year. The last day to earn hours is **April 15th** of the senior year. All students at Waukee Northwest and Waukee High Schools and 9th graders at Prairieview and Timberline Schools (beginning June 1st) are registered for the Silver Cord Program. Log in to the Silver Cord website at **www.waukeesilvercord.org** with your District username and password to begin adding volunteer hours.

## **Recording Hours**

1. Student logs in to the Silver Cord website with their @waukeeschools.org email and password. Student can view approved and pending volunteer hours, add hours, view approved organizations, and submit organizations for approval.
2. Student finds available opportunities via the link on the Silver Cord website, District website, Canvas or ParentSquare.
3. Student views the approved volunteer organizations under View Organizations. If interested in volunteering with an organization that is not listed, the student submits the organization for approval **using Add Organization**. Student asks for supervisor's full name and email address. This information will be required, if the student needs to submit the organization for approval. The approving supervisor cannot be another student or a parent, unless that parent is employed or directly affiliated with the volunteer organization and also approves hours for other volunteers in the same activity. Students should plan ahead and submit organizations for approval prior to the 30-day deadline. The approval process can take up to 10 business days. Student will be notified via email when the organization has been reviewed.
4. Student volunteers with an approved Silver Cord organization. Ask for the Silver Cord approved organization name for use in submitting volunteer hours, as they are the only ones who can verify you volunteered those hours. Submit hours on your Silver Cord page using **Submit Hours**.
5. Student submits hours on Silver Cord website within 30 days of completion of **each** volunteer service. Students can earn a **maximum of eight Silver Cord hours per day**. Service cannot be during a student's scheduled school day, even if the student is excused from class. Submitted time cannot include meals, breaks, sleeping, recreation, or travel.
6. When hours are submitted, the entry is marked as pending and an email is automatically sent to the organization contact requesting verification of the hours. The Silver Cord Supervisor is notified when the contact responds.
7. The Silver Cord Supervisor reviews the submission and approves or denies the hours. The status of the entry is changed to approved (green check mark) or denied (gray x). Student is notified that the hours have been reviewed.

## **Guidelines**

- Students are eligible to earn Silver Cord hours for service occurring between **June 1st of their incoming 9th grade year** and **April 15th of their senior year**.
- Students who have volunteered **150** hours by April **15th** of their senior year will have the distinct honor of wearing a Silver Cord during their graduation ceremony.
- Students can earn a **maximum of eight Silver Cord hours per day**. If more than eight hours were served they are not eligible hours and **cannot** be carried over to the next day.
- Students may choose to earn up to **80** of their total required Silver Cord hours volunteering within the District.
- Silver Cord hours cannot include meals, breaks, sleeping, recreation, or travel.
- Silver Cord hours cannot be approved by a student.
- Silver Cord hours cannot be approved by a parent, unless the parent is employed or directly affiliated with the organization **and** also approves hours for other Waukee CSD volunteers in the same activity.

- A student cannot earn hours during their scheduled school day, even if the student is excused from class. A student can earn hours during a scheduled open block.
- Silver Cord hours must be submitted within 30 days of completion of **each** volunteer service. The volunteer organization must be included in the list of approved organizations on the Silver Cord website before hours can be added. Students should plan ahead and submit organizations for approval prior to the 30-day deadline.
- Communication regarding the Silver Cord Program is sent to students via their Waukee Schools email address. Students should access this account regularly for updates regarding the program and their Silver Cord hours.

## Transfer Students

Transfer students are eligible to wear a silver honor cord at graduation. Total hour requirements will be prorated based on the date of enrollment in the District and possible participation in a similar program at a previous school. Please notify the Silver Cord Supervisor if you are a transfer student.

## Finding Approved Volunteer Opportunities

Students can earn Silver Cord hours for any non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. A link to available opportunities is listed on the Silver Cord website, District website, Canvas and ParentSquare. Students are not limited to posted opportunities; however, all organizations must be included in the organization dropdown menu on the Silver Cord website before hours can be added. Students must plan ahead and submit new organizations for approval prior to the 30-day deadline to submit.

## Scholarships

The Silver Cord office can provide letters of community service verification for college admission, scholarship applications, or other applicable opportunities.

## Recognition

Students who have volunteered **80** or more hours will be recognized on the District website at the end of the 1st semester after completion of this milestone.

Students who volunteer **150** hours by April **15th** of their senior year will receive a Silver Cord Certificate signed by the corresponding Principal and the Silver Cord Supervisor. Students are awarded their silver honor cord on graduation day and have the distinction of wearing it over their graduation gown during the ceremony. Students **keep** their silver cord to remember the people they have served and the experiences gained as a Silver Cord Program participant.

## Acceptable and Non-Acceptable Service Activities

Volunteer service hours must meet a clear need and be performed through a non-profit 501(c)(3) agency or affiliated organization. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the Silver Cord Program .

Students may choose to earn up to **80** of their total **150** Silver Cord hours volunteering for the District. This includes all K-12 buildings, the District Office, and Community Education programs. Not all District activities are eligible for Silver Cord hours. The following requirements apply:

- The work is above and beyond what is expected.
- No varsity letter, school credit or grade is given.
- The student or organization the student belongs to does not receive financial or other compensation. This includes but is not limited to direct sales, fundraisers or donations. An exception may be approved, in advance, if the organization donates the profits to charity.
- Students who provide service to a non-Varsity team by participating as a manager can earn up to a maximum of 25 hours per school year for that activity. Varsity team managers are eligible to earn an athletic letter rather than Silver Cord hours.
- Students who provide service to fellow students by participating in a show choir band or crew, jazz choir combo, pep band, or as the school mascot may earn up to a maximum of 25 hours per school year for that activity. Students can earn up to a maximum of 25 hours by participating in a theater pit band or theater crew, if they are not earning lettering points.

## At Home Hours

Service completed at home must be pre-approved by the Silver Cord Program. The Silver Cord Program will work with the non-profit organization and the student on a case-by-case basis to determine eligible opportunities.

## Religious/Church Activities

Accepted religious activities include, but are not limited to: volunteer service during mission trips; teaching or assisting with weekly bible school, vacation bible school, confirmation classes, or special performances for younger students, child care during religious services, greeting/ushering before services, working on a production or sound crew.

Silver Cord hours may not be directly involved with the rituals, services, or ceremonies of any specific religion. Examples of non-acceptable activities include, but are not limited to: singing in the choir/worship team, playing in the band, candle lighting, reading from religious texts, altar service, or collecting offerings unless it is done for more than one service on the same weekend. Performance in programs such as nativity plays, choral concerts or other special events are also considered non-acceptable events.

## Other examples of non-acceptable service include, but are not limited to:

- Babysitting, yard work, or helping individuals, whether related or non-related.
- Acting as a participant in a charity walk, run or fundraiser.
- Music or athletic practices/rehearsals.
- Activities or services that are required as part of membership in an organization or club.
- Activities or services that are required for merit badges, advancements or awards in Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H or similar organizations.
- Rehearsals and performances that are expected as part of participation in a voluntary arts program. With prior approval, an exception may be made for performance at non-mandatory community service events.
- Service that is part of an academic, court-ordered, or discipline requirement.
- Participation in self-improvement workshops or clinics.
- Activities for which a student or a group to which a student belongs is financially compensated.
- Volunteering for a campaign for a specific political candidate.
- Donating blood.

*Activities not addressed in this handbook are not guaranteed to be acceptable for Silver Cord hours. Questions regarding the eligibility of any service should be directed to the Silver Cord Program Supervisor prior to volunteering.*

## Appeal Process

If a student or parent(s) wishes to appeal a decision of the Silver Cord Supervisor, they must do so in writing to the Director of Community Education within three business days of the receipt of the Silver Cord Supervisor's decision. The Director of Community Education shall consider the circumstances and evidence of the case and shall make a decision, which will be communicated in writing to the student, parent(s), and Silver Cord Supervisor. The decision of the Director of Community Education shall be made within fourteen business days following the date on which the appeal was received.

## **CONTINUOUS NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

It is District policy not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment) marital status (for programs), genetic information (for employment), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination.

If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact one of the following:

### **Executive Director of Human Resources: Roxy Livermore**

Waukee Community School District  
560 SE University Avenue, Waukee, IA 50263  
Phone: 515.987.5161  
Fax: 515.987.2701  
Email: [rlivermore@waukeeschools.org](mailto:rlivermore@waukeeschools.org)

### **Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission**

6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50321-1270  
Phone: 1.800.457.4416

### **Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights**

Department of Education  
230 S. Dearborn St., 37th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604  
Phone: 312.730.1560  
Fax: 312.730.1576  
Email: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov).

The District complaint procedure is outlined in [Board Policy 101-R\(1\)](#). ([Board Policy 104](#))