

## Policy on Academic Honesty

*This document is to read in conjunction with the JCQ document 'Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures' and International Baccalaureate Organisation's document 'Academic Honesty in the IB.'*

The aim of the College is to enable girls and boys to develop their enjoyment of learning, academic potential and individual talents in a caring community, which fosters confidence, communication, innovation, resilience, open-mindedness and inquiry.

**Policy objective:** To create a learning environment in which pupils produce and value original work and respect the work of others.

### Policy Aims:

- To define malpractice and academic honesty
- To promote integrity in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.
- To outline responsibilities for ensuring academic honesty
- To set out responses for investigating academic misconduct and subsequent sanctions.

### Malpractice (Academic Dishonesty):

Malpractice is the generic term for any attempt by the pupil to gain an unfair advantage in any assignment or examination. All examination boards have a list of published policies on malpractice, and the College would comply with these regulations in full.

Outside the examination hall itself, malpractice tends to fall into one of three broad categories:

**Collusion** – this is defined as ‘a secret agreement for a fraudulent purpose’ and could include working together on an individual project or allowing another pupil to copy work, and to hand it in as their own.

**Duplication of Work** – this is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/ or assessment requirements.

**Plagiarism** – this is the most common form of academic dishonesty. It is a complex, multi-faceted and ethically-challenging problem. Our definition is intended to be simple and direct relating to the College context for which it is intended in order to be helpful to pupils, parents and teachers.

### Definition of Plagiarism

*At Bradfield College plagiarism occurs when a pupil deliberately and intentionally uses someone else's language, ideas or other original material without acknowledging its source. It is an attempt to cheat.*

This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other pupils or teachers. Most typically, this occurs when a pupil submits someone else's text – or extracts from that text – as their own or attempts to blur the line between their ideas and words and those borrowed from another source. This is academic misconduct or plagiarism.

## **Misuse of Sources**

It is possible for a pupil to be guilty of inaccuracy rather than intended plagiarism. Typically, this occurs when a pupil carelessly or inadequately cites ideas and words borrowed from another source. This is a misuse of sources. Repeated misuse through laziness will be penalised.

## **Differentiating Between Misuse of Sources and Plagiarism**

An ethical pupil is expected to make every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately in accordance with the contexts and genres of their work. A pupil who attempts, however clumsily, to identify and credit his or her sources, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarised. Instead this pupil should be considered to have misused his sources.

## **Shared Responsibilities**

If pupils are not sufficiently educated in source attribution, teachers can often find themselves in the adversarial role of 'plagiarism police' instead of their guiding role as educators. While pupils must live up to their responsibility to behave ethically and honestly as learners, teachers must recognise that plagiarism can be discouraged not only by policy and admonition but, more positively, in the ways they structure assignments and in the processes they use to help pupils define and gain interest in curriculum topics, as well as in the manner in which they mark and annotate the work of pupils where drafting is required.

## **The College's Responsibilities**

The College values academic honesty. This includes:

- Public displays and presentations of policies and expectations for conducting ethical academic research to ensure that all teaching staff understand the College's commitment to academic honesty
- A transparent set of procedures for investigating possible cases of plagiarism
- Ensuring that pupils receive clear instruction on academic honesty, referencing and citation that is reinforced throughout their time at the College
- Providing support services (for example, in the Library) for pupils who have questions about how to cite sources
- Providing opportunities to discuss issues concerning academic honesty, research, ethics, and plagiarism in Tutorials and lessons
- Highlighting issues of academic honesty among both the pupil body and the teaching staff
- Parents of IB Diploma pupils receive copies of IB publications specific to academic honesty due to the significant coursework content of the Diploma

## **Teaching Responsibilities**

There are a number of things teachers can do to promote a culture of academic honesty and to create an environment where it is understood and where academic dishonesty is considered unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of the teachers to:

- Be aware of the College's policy on academic honesty and model it in all of their practice
- Design assignments for learning that encourage pupils not simply to recycle information but to develop higher order learning skills such as the investigation and analysis of sources.
- Ensure that pupils are taught the relevant academic conventions of citation and acknowledgement, and given the opportunity to practice these skills
- Avoid the use of formulaic assignments that may invite stock or plagiarised responses
- Engage the pupils in the processes of writing: notes, drafts and revisions
- Alert pupils to the possible difficulties they may face when analysing sources and offering possible strategies to solve them
- Discuss written work suspected of plagiarism with the pupil to determine if it is a deliberate intent to deceive
- Report possible cases of plagiarism to the Head of Department and Deputy Head for further investigation

### **Heads of Department Responsibilities**

Heads of Department should model all of the above and make sure that it is adhered to in their department.

They also have the responsibility to ensure that:

- Schemes of work should include support for researched writing
- Department handbooks should state in writing the department's policies and expectations for documenting sources and avoiding plagiarism

### **Pupil Responsibilities**

Pupils should understand research assignments – Project work, GCSE, A level and IB DP coursework, Extended Essay and all work for ToK - as opportunities for genuine and rigorous inquiry and learning.

Such an understanding involves:

- Assembling and analysing a set of relevant sources determined by themselves in communication with their teachers
- Acknowledging clearly when they are drawing upon the ideas of others
- Avoiding collusion when embarking upon any assessed coursework
- Avoiding borrowing the work of others or using exemplar material as a model for their own

- Learning and using appropriate academic conventions of citation
- Consulting their teachers when they are unsure about how to acknowledge the contributions of others to their thoughts and writing
- Accepting that all assessed work must be their own and signing a declaration to that effect for all work that is submitted as part of an external examination

### **Investigating Alleged Cases of Plagiarism or Collusion**

Classroom teachers will educate pupils about the risks of academic dishonesty and plagiarism referring to their academic subjects and the nature of assessed written work. Monitoring ought to occur through the planning, drafting & writing stages of these assignments.

### **On-going Monitoring and Advice**

If a classroom teacher suspects a pupil of possible abuse of sources or of deliberate plagiarism he/she should in the first instance discuss this with the pupil and have a clear idea of the extent of the alleged plagiarism. In the unlikely event of the issues failing to be resolved between the classroom teacher and the pupil, the Head of Department should be informed of the situation. It should be made clear to the pupil that he has breached conventions of academic honesty and his errors clearly explained with advice as to how this can be rectified. The piece of work will receive a zero grade and the pupil will redo it. The pupil's HsM and the parents ought to be advised of the potential seriousness of the matter. A record of the case will be kept on the pupil's file and in the Academic Office.

### **Responding to Possible Academic Misconduct in Completed Assignments**

If the classroom teacher/assessor suspects that a pupil's completed work is vulnerable to charges of plagiarism he/she must firstly address the issues with the pupil. If the teacher is satisfied that this is a matter for further investigation rather than straightforward sanction (e.g. low-level copying) then he/ she must inform his/her Head of Department in order to complete the departmental investigation. The pupil's HsM should now be informed. Assessment of the work must be suspended at this stage while the extent of the plagiarism is assessed.

Full details of the case should now be shared with the Deputy Head with the particular issues of academic misconduct, and its extent, highlighted to confirm that this is a case of wilful academic misconduct rather than ignorance of academic convention.

### **Interview**

The Deputy Head will interview the pupil together with the pupil's HsM. If the HsM is unavailable the Tutor or other Senior teacher will deputise. The interview will investigate the complaint thoroughly and attempt to ascertain the ostensible and underlying causes of the academic misconduct. The Deputy Head will contact the pupil's parents and discuss the case with them explaining the issues raised.

The Deputy Head (Academic) will summarise the case for the Second Master and make a recommendation of the appropriate sanction. The Second Master will decide upon the final sanction and will contact pupil's parents informing them of the College's decision. The Head Master will be duly updated with each case should it result in temporary suspension. Teaching staff and, possibly, fellow pupils may be informed of the decision, if appropriate.

## **Pupil's rights**

If a pupil wishes, they are within their rights to request that another adult is present in the meeting as support, such as a tutor or teacher this may come into play in particularly severe cases.

## **Effective Sanctions**

The College will apply an appropriate sanction decided upon individually according to the particular details of each case. These sanctions may vary from an Academic Detention, Saturday Detention to formal Suspension, or even expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the case. In every case the pupils will be encouraged to recognise their misconduct, to reflect upon its causes, and will be supported through educative strategies to try to ensure such incidents are avoided in the future. The pupil will be given the opportunity to redeem himself after the matter has been resolved.

## **Examples**

### *i. Malpractice in an internal examination*

This is a serious offence which, if repeated in a public examination, could have catastrophic consequences for the individual. Therefore, such instances should always be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic), and the appropriate sanctions will be applied.

### *ii. Heavily lifting text from one or more websites in a Faulkners Divisions essay*

Whilst this undoubtedly constitutes plagiarism, the seriousness of the offence may not be apparent to the pupil. This should be dealt with through a meeting with the teacher and a thorough explanation would be made as to why the pupil is in the wrong.

### *iii. Cheating in a class test or copying prep*

A first offence of this nature should be dealt with directly by the teacher, perhaps with an email sent to HsM and tutor to alert them to the issue. The pupil would be made to re-do the test under controlled conditions. Persistent offences should be referred to the Head of Department, and the pupil would be put in the appropriate detention. Further instances after this should then be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic).

### *iv. Malpractice in a piece of examined coursework*

This is automatically a serious offence that should be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic) and the appropriate interventions would be made. This particular form of mis-conduct would generate communication with parents.

## **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that it stays in line with the most current thinking on academic honesty, and with any developments of school initiatives.

*Elements of this policy are based on the Academic Honesty Policy produced by Haileybury School & Oakham Schools and it is further informed by the IB publications 'Academic Honesty in the Diploma Programme' and 'Academic Honesty in the IB Educational Context' (2014). It is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence (CC BY-NC-SA).*

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