BRADFIELD COLLEGE

Academic Honesty Policy

Document Control	
Document title:	Academic Honesty Policy
Author:	JSE, Deputy Head (Academic)
Version number:	1.9
Document status:	Live
Document status:	Approved by Education Committee
Effective date:	September 2026
Date of next full review:	September 2027
Documentation Location	Website

Version	**Author**	**Date**	**Changes**
1.5	NMB	09/21	General view of changes made since previous version
1.6	NMB	09/22	General Review – no changes
1.7	ELW	09/24	General Review – minor changes
1.8	JSE	09/25	General Review – minor changes
1.9	JSE	09/26	General Review – minor changes

Policy on Academic Honesty

Last reviewed/revised: September 2026

This document is to be read in conjunction with:

- *The JCQ document 'Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures'*
- *the International Baccalaureate Organisation's document 'Academic Integrity'*
- *The College's 'Appropriate Use of AI' Policy*

The aim of the College is to enable pupils to develop their enjoyment of learning, academic potential and individual talents in a caring community which fosters sensitivity, confidence, a sense of service and enthusiasm for life.

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. This could include getting unauthorised or unacknowledged help from someone else with a piece of work, or cheating in an examination by taking into the room a phone or some other prohibited device. It could also include falsifying a signature or making false claims. 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 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 School 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, or work produced by artificial intelligence. 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 their sources.

What are the Causes of Plagiarism?

Pupils who intentionally plagiarise – for example, copying published information into an essay or coursework assignment without attributing its source for the purpose of claiming the information as their own – are guilty of serious academic misconduct. There is no excuse for this breach of academic ethics, but it is appropriate to consider the reasons why pupils plagiarise in order to help pupils, parents and teachers consider how to reduce the opportunities for plagiarism in their work:

- Fear of failure
- Poor time-management and/or planning skills
- Lack of respect for academic conventions
- Little understanding of assignment
- Failure of teachers to recognise plagiarism or to enforce appropriate penalties – pupils have 'got away with it' before.

Pupils are not guilty of plagiarism when they try in good faith to acknowledge others' work but do so inaccurately or incompletely. These failures are usually the consequence of weaknesses in prior teaching and learning: some pupils may not know how or lack the ability to use the conventions of authorial attribution. The following reasons may explain why pupils' work can *falsely* appear to represent plagiarism as the College has defined it:

- Lack of knowledge of how to integrate the ideas of others and document the sources of those ideas appropriately in their texts

- Mistakes in attribution occurring as a natural part of the learning process

- Poor note-taking skills

- Teachers not fully recognising academic conventions

- Teachers assuming all pupils have acquired the skills and knowledge of the academic conventions of research and documentation and so unintentionally failing to support the pupil

- Pupils being confused by the variation in the conventions of source attribution in different contexts.

Pupils and parents should, however, be aware that laziness on the part of the pupil in carelessly misapplying citation and acknowledgement will be penalised for its wilful lack of appreciation for academic rigour.

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.

Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils should understand research assignments – Project work, GCSE coursework, A-level coursework and IB Diploma Coursework and Extended Essay - 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

- 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 should be their own.

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.

- Teachers should 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
- Schemes of work should include support for researched writing
- Pupils need to be taught relevant academic conventions of citation and acknowledgement, and given the opportunity to practice these skills
- Avoiding the use of formulaic assignments that may invite stock or plagiarised responses
- Engaging the pupils in the processes of writing: notes, drafts and revisions
- Alerting pupils to the possible difficulties they may face when analysing sources and offering possible strategies to solve them
- Discussing written work suspected of plagiarism with the pupil to determine if it is a deliberate intent to deceive
- Reporting possible cases of plagiarism to the Head of Department and Deputy Head (Academic) for further investigation

The College's Responsibilities

The School values academic honesty. This includes:

- Public presentations of policies and expectations for conducting ethical academic research
- A transparent set of procedures for investigating possible cases of plagiarism
- 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

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 and 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 follow the internal *Academic Misconduct Policy*. In the first instance this will involve discussion with the pupil and establishing 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 they have breached conventions of academic honesty and their 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 (Academic), including the particular issues of academic misconduct and its extent, in order to confirm that this is a case of wilful academic misconduct rather than ignorance of academic convention.

Meeting

The Deputy Head (Academic)/Director of Teaching & Learning will meet the pupil together with the pupil's HsM. If the HsM is unavailable the Tutor or other Senior Teacher will deputise. The purpose of this meeting will be to investigate the case thoroughly and attempt to ascertain the ostensible and underlying causes of the academic misconduct. The Deputy Head (Academic) 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 Headmaster and make a recommendation of the appropriate sanction. The Headmaster will decide upon the final sanction. The Headmaster will contact the pupil's parents informing them of the College's decision. Teaching staff and, possibly, fellow pupils may be informed of the decision, if appropriate.

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 or Weekend Detention to formal Suspension, or even expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the case. The range of sanctions is detailed in the *Academic Misconduct Pathway*. 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.