

# Fairview High School Honors Program Academic Honesty Policy



## Philosophy

One of the major educational themes at Fairview is that of teaching and reinforcing citizenship and responsibilities for one's actions. Thus, it is expected that the behavior of students makes a positive difference in their own lives, in the lives of others, and in the entire school community. A second theme is that of motivating students to develop and maintain high personal expectations and goals for high school and beyond. The faculty is committed to promoting and reinforcing self-respect, respect for others, respect for property, and responsible behavior.

## Academic Honesty Policy

Intellectual honesty is a vital part of the IB and AP programs; it is the foundation for properly meeting the challenges of college study, which is what the honors program is designed to do. Honors students are expected to respond to academic challenges with the highest degree of integrity and honesty, which means fulfilling assignments/exams in the manner in which they are intended. Actions contrary to this standard are considered academic malpractice. Students are expected to maintain personal honesty and integrity at all times.

## Amplification

So what is academic malpractice (cheating)? Cheating is defined as representing someone else's work as your own or allowing someone to represent your work as their own. Common forms of cheating include:

- Copying homework or allowing someone to copy your homework
- Looking on another's test or quiz or letting another student look on a test or quiz
- Reporting to another student what is on a test or quiz, including providing questions or specific answers
- Using any secretive methods of giving answers on a test or quiz
- Taking information from another source that is not properly attributed
- Working with others on an assignment that was meant to be done individually
- Taking someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as your own
- Using summaries or Cliff notes instead of reading assigned material
- Copying answers from the back of the text book where applicable

This is not a complete list, but it covers a good number of forms of cheating.<sup>1</sup> The goal of this policy is not to list every conceivable example or form of cheating, but to convey to students the correct attitude that should be taken when presented an academic challenge. Do the real work and don't take shortcuts.

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<sup>1</sup> As an example of giving proper credit, this citation is referencing the list of cheating circumstances posted on York High School's Academic Integrity (Cheating) Policy; available online at <http://www.yorkschoools.org/yhs/documents/Integrity%202005.pdf>. (permission granted)

Obvious forms of cheating include intentionally copying answers on a test or submitting a paper taken directly from the internet. However, incidents of cheating often manifest themselves more subtly; where this subtle form of cheating occurs most often is with **homework** and **plagiarism**.

- **Homework.** Many students erroneously justify copying other students' homework because they believe they already understand the material and it is only tests that should count toward course grades; since homework does not "count," then it is ok to copy it. Some will rationalize that even though the homework was copied, at least it was "processed" by the person doing the copying, meaning it was handwritten or copied on a computer; that ought to be worth something (after all, it still required some effort). These rationalized arguments, or any others that involve copying homework, are NOT acceptable.
- **Plagiarism.** In today's electronic world of computers and seemingly endless sources of information on the internet, it is very easy to gather information electronically (i.e. cut and paste from websites or emailing papers amongst students). It has been proposed that students have not been taught acceptable uses of these mediums. For example, is it ok to email a paper to a friend so they can read main ideas and see how arguments were arranged for the purpose of *learning* (as opposed to out-right copying)? Although the initial motive for sending the paper may be pure, there is no guarantee the student receiving the paper will stop at gleaning ideas for learning; the temptation to misuse electronic files is too great. Do not share electronic files. Concerning plagiarism, if **ideas** are copied without proper citation, it is cheating.
- **Don't fool yourself!** Cheating on assignments is done by many types of students, those who are looking for a quick way to complete an assignment, or on the other end of the spectrum, by students who work very hard to produce a seemingly excellent finished product. Some students who engage in cheating may have actually worked very hard on the broader assignment. An otherwise well-written paper (which required a significant amount of work to assemble it) that is even partially plagiarized is still a plagiarized paper. Where students sometimes get confused is that they fool themselves into believing their paper is valid because of the **work** they put into it, conveniently ignoring the plagiarized part(s). In this case the "work" that was done is rationalized as being more important than the cheating. Cheating is never acceptable, regardless of the motive or how much work was put into other portions of the assignment.



Fulfill assignments in the manner in which they are intended.

Assignments, whether they be homework, group projects, tests, papers, or journal/lab books are designed to help you (the student) learn . . . and to teach you how to think. They are designed to exercise your thought process about a certain topic. As you genuinely work through your assignments, pondering the various elements, arguing conclusions in your mind, and distilling evidence, you are growing intellectually. Anytime a student does **not** go through this process, but gives an **appearance** of doing it correctly, it can be viewed as academic malpractice.

## Consequences

Cheating is a serious offense and students who do it are subject to corrective actions, which are one or more disciplinary actions designed to give students a firm incentive to not engage in cheating again. Experience has taught that verbal warnings for cheating are actually counterproductive; therefore, students who engage in cheating can anticipate tangible and concrete consequences for their actions . . . for first time offenses.

Corrective actions will be determined by an Ethics Board (made up of designated teachers, counselors, and administrators) on a case-by-case basis. The board will review the unique circumstances of each case and make recommendations to teachers and/or administrators for assigning consequences. Corrective actions can range from getting a zero on the assignment where cheating occurred all the way to suspension. Three important notes:

- 1) When alleged cheating occurs, students (who may be accompanied by their parents) will always have an opportunity to explain themselves. It is important to note, however, that the Ethics Board will be the first arbiter of whether cheating occurred or not. An admission of guilt on the part of the student is not required for the board to conclude cheating occurred and to take corrective action. The school district has an appeal process.
- 2) Multiple offenses of cheating will bring more severe consequences. More often than not (unfortunately) when one example of cheating by a student is discovered, it is learned later that the student had engaged in other incidents of cheating as well. Multiple infractions of academic malpractice will be treated as such, regardless if a warning was given to the student previously. In one example, it was discovered that a student had plagiarized three distinct pieces of work in two separate classes over the period of a month (all three infractions of academic malpractice were discovered at the same time). When confronted, the student argued that he/she should only be punished for one incident of cheating because he/she had never received a warning about his/her actions. This argument is not valid. This document is your warning.
- 3) Many students who have been caught cheating have asked that their colleges and universities (where they made application) not be notified of the cheating incident(s). This request is made for obvious reasons, and it is for these very same reasons that **colleges and universities WILL be notified**. Colleges and universities routinely solicit school officials about students who have made application to their institution. As a matter of professional and ethical obligation, Fairview officials will report suspensions, incidents of cheating, or other documented disciplinary actions as requested by colleges and universities.

Students, please take this issue seriously. Finishing high school with honor and integrity is far more important than cheating your way into a seemingly prestigious university. Discuss this issue with mom and dad, work with your teachers, and be a good role model to your fellow students.