

Academic Integrity Policy

VERSION 2.1

SHARPSTOWN
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL



Philosophy

At Sharpstown International School, we strive to nurture respect relating to academic integrity by stressing the importance of the IB Learner Profile attributes, most notably principled, which calls us to “act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice” and to “take responsibility for our actions and their consequences” (IB Learner Profile).

We are committed to inquiry-based, cooperative, constructivist learning experiences. This dedication must be appropriately addressed through the lens of academic integrity. Educators must explicitly teach what is and is not appropriate when it comes to collaboration and use of others’ ideas, “stressing the scholarly role of the approaches to learning skills of information literacy, problem-solving and self-management” (Carroll 5).

Although students must be taught to appreciate the merits of academic integrity, there must be no uncertainty about the consequences of acting in a dishonest manner or failing to observe the standard academic practice of acknowledging the work of another person.

Teaching Academic Integrity

We encourage our students to exhibit the Spartan spirit of hard work and determination and act in a principled way that consistently reflects academic integrity. Through ongoing instruction in every subject, our students will understand the meaning and significance of the following concepts:

Authentic authorship: An authentic piece of work is one that is based on the student’s individual and original ideas with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Therefore, all assignments, written or oral, completed by a student for assessment must wholly and authentically use that student’s own language and expression. Where sources are used or referred to, whether in the form of direct quotation or paraphrase, such sources must be fully and appropriately acknowledged. In summary, any assignment turned in must be the original work of the student turning it in.

Intellectual property: Students will respect intellectual property rights and the laws that protect intellectual property, which vary around the world. Intellectual property rights are not limited to patents, trademarks, and copyright. Students must at least be aware that forms of intellectual and creative expression (for example, works of literature, art, or music) must be respected and are normally protected by national and international law. Students should also be aware of illegal out-of-school activities (for example, illegal music downloads, peer-to-peer file sharing) for which they could face legal consequences.

Malpractice: The IB defines malpractice as “behaviour (whether deliberate or inadvertent) that results in, or may result in, the [student] or any other [student] gaining an unfair

advantage in one or more components of assessment. Behaviour that may disadvantage another [student] is also regarded as academic misconduct” (General regulations: Middle Years Programme).

Collaboration vs. collusion: In order for students to engage in collaboration on an assignment or project, they must have the teacher’s explicit permission to work together. Collusion involves a secret agreement or cooperation for a deceitful purpose; it involves gaining an unfair advantage, misleading, or deceiving, and is thus considered malpractice.

Academic Misconduct at Sharpstown International School

Academic misconduct includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

- a. **plagiarism**—this is defined as the representation, intentionally or unintentionally, of the ideas, words, or work of another person without proper, clear, and explicit acknowledgment. The use of translated materials, unless indicated and acknowledged, is also considered plagiarism.
- b. **collusion**—this is defined as supporting academic misconduct by another student, for example, allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted for assessment by someone else or submitting work done jointly or with unauthorized assistance as if it was done independently
- c. **duplication of work**—this is defined as submitting the same work for different assessments that may or may not be in different courses, without the explicit permission of the teacher(s) involved
- d. **misconduct during an examination** (for example, taking unauthorized material into an examination-whether it is used or not, behavior that disrupts the examination or distracts other students, communicating with another student during the examination)
- e. **any other behavior that gains an unfair advantage for a student or that affects the results of another student** (for example, falsifying a community service record, disclosure of information to and receipt of information from students about the content of an examination via any form of communication/media).

Responses to Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct can present an opportunity for learning. Teachers should use these occasions to correct misunderstandings and guide students towards the most principled actions in the future.

In Houston ISD, academic misconduct is considered a Level II offense requiring referral to an administrator. The disciplinary response to Level II offenses depends on the offense, previous actions, and the seriousness of the misbehavior.

Disciplinary responses to academic misconduct can include any of the following:

- A zero in the gradebook for the assignment, with a notation of academic misconduct
- Written or oral notification to parent or guardian
- Required administrator/student/parent conference
- Detention or placement in in-school suspension
- Placement on a magnet growth plan, which can affect renewal of magnet transfer
- Out-of-school suspension
- Documentation on the student's permanent record
- Notification to colleges and universities
- Other disciplinary actions deemed appropriate for the circumstances by administration and within the scope of the district code of conduct

Student Responsibilities

Acknowledge understanding of this policy by signing the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Pledge forms each school year.

Report academic misconduct to school employees.

Consistently produce authentic work.

Employ proper citations (MLA, APA) when referencing the ideas and work of someone else.

Work independently, unless you have explicit permission from your teacher to work with others. Always ask for clarification when unsure.

Understand that the following are examples of academic misconduct per the district's Code of Student Conduct: "cheating, plagiarism, or copying the work of other students, which includes failure to comply with test security procedures and use of cell phones, smart watches, and electronic devices during testing" and committing these acts will result in consequences.

Teacher Responsibilities

Communicate and clarify appropriate collaboration for students. Consistently identify whether work is to be collaborative in nature or independent effort.

Emphasize the value of authentic authorship with a focus on honesty, integrity, and respect for the work of others. Teach proper citation for all media.

Report academic misconduct to administrators and parents, including formal IB assessment components. Support administrators and the IB in all investigations.

School Responsibilities

Support faculty when an instance of academic misconduct is reported by fully investigating such reports.

Ensure that all students, faculty, and parents understand examples of academic misconduct.

Follow district and school policies and procedures for consequences when misconduct occurs.

Parent Responsibilities

Read and sign Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Pledge forms.

Assist the school by encouraging your child to consistently adhere to this policy.

Promote development of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in your family.

Supporting Reference Material for Teachers and Students

Effective citing and referencing, published by the International Baccalaureate August 2014, found at <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/effective-citing-and-referencing-en.pdf>

MLA Formatting and Style Guide, Purdue Online Writing Lab, found at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html

APA Formatting and Style Guide, Purdue Online Writing Lab, found at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Policy Implementation

All students are bound by the Houston ISD Code of Student Conduct, which is available online and in hard copy by request. Students and parents sign an Academic Integrity Pledge annually. All teachers, students, and parents/guardians have access to academic integrity resources available online in the district learning management system, the HUB. All classroom teachers are expected to teach academic integrity concepts throughout the course of the school year.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually and communicated to the school community through the school website. Teachers and other staff members participate in annual refresher training on our policies and practices as well as ongoing professional development as needed.

Amendments to this policy are considered as needed based on changes to IB policy, federal and state policies, district policy, and community needs.

Works Cited

Carroll, J. July 2012. Academic honesty in the IB. IB Position Paper.

<http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf>