10.29 College Academic Honesty Policy

Rationale

1. Academic honesty and personal integrity lie at the heart of UWCSEA’s values. They are fundamental components of a student’s education and character development, laying the foundations for independent learning, confidence in one’s own abilities, respect and self-esteem. UWCSEA expects students to be honest in all their academic work and believes that students, teachers and parents have a special responsibility to ensure that academic honesty is valued and upheld.

2. The following policy has been put in place to ensure that high standards of academic honesty and personal integrity are maintained and that personal achievement is prized by all.

Definition

3. The High School defines malpractice to be “The representation of ideas or work of another person as the candidate’s own”, as stated in the IB document Academic honesty: guidance for schools. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable in any manifestation in our College.

Academic dishonesty takes many forms, including but not confined to:

3.1. Copying and failing to cite quotations, paragraphs, and/or whole pages from any source and presenting them as if the student wrote them him/herself; (this applies to both written papers and oral presentations). This also includes copying visual images without citing sources correctly;

3.2. Students using someone else’s paper or portions of a paper and presenting it as their own work;

3.3. Changing words when using a source and copying most of it, including sentence structure;

3.4. Using an Internet translator and claiming the translation as the student’s own;

3.5. Over reliance on, or undue assistance by, for example, another student, parent or tutor. i.e. the work is no longer a true representation of the student.

Student Support

4. All students and parents are informed of the College’s views on the importance of academic honesty and therefore recognize that academic dishonesty runs counter to the College’s values and ethos.

5. In the first weeks of Grade 9, FIB and 11, the academic honesty policy will be explained to all students. Students will be asked to sign a slip acknowledging they have been made aware of this information. (The signed slip will be kept in students’ files). Early in Grades 10 and 12, the importance of academic honesty will again be reiterated.

6. Students are progressively given research opportunities across the curriculum, preparing them for the high level of research skills required in the IB Diploma.

7. All high school students are taught how to reference correctly, using the MLA system of Referencing, full details of which are on the College Web site and in student planners.
8. Care is taken to inform students at the beginning of each academic year, of the different ways in which malpractice can occur. Individual teachers reiterate this message throughout the year.

9. There are appropriate staged sanctions to deal with cases of academic dishonesty, in line with our values and with our pastoral system.

Process and Sanctions

10. Malpractice within coursework, class work or homework is regarded as academic dishonesty and therefore treated seriously. In addition to school sanctions, students need to be aware that malpractice within coursework may also result in examination boards disallowing students in one or all subjects. At the IB level this would lead to a failed Diploma.

11. In the event that an assignment, whether class work, homework or coursework, is found to contain information lifted from an external source such as the internet, published texts, parents or tutors, and not referenced by the student, the following measures come into place:

11.1. In grades 6-8:
   a. The student is approached individually by the class teacher and asked whether they received help from any other source in the completion of their assignment. If the answer is yes, they are asked the nature of the source. If this explanation is sufficient, a reminder is given about the definition of malpractice and the student is asked to repeat the assignment.

   b. If the student denies any kind of external help, the evidence is presented to them. They are reminded of the definition of malpractice, asked to repeat the assignment and the Head of Department is informed.

   c. Any student who has received the warning but repeats the malpractice is seen by the Head of Grade for further disciplinary action. In serious cases, this might include suspension.

11.2. In grades 9-12:
   a. A genuine error - If a teacher suspects malpractice in a piece of work, he/she will speak to the student at an opportune and private moment to ascertain if malpractice/plagiarism has taken place. If a genuine error has occurred, the teacher will clarify with the student, how to source correctly. The teacher will send a brief note to the Tutor, cc the student's Head of Grade, and his/her HOD; no further action is required.

   b. The first instance of malpractice - If malpractice appears evident, the teacher must notify the Head of Department as soon as possible. The Head of Department will check with the student’s Head of Grade, to ascertain whether this is the first case of academic dishonesty. If it is, the Head of Department will speak to the student concerned and warn him/her of the serious consequences of any further misconduct. The Head of Department will inform the parents of the incident, in writing, cc the Tutor and Head of Grade. The Head of Grade will file the letter in the student's file.

   c. Repeat malpractice - Any student who has previously been warned about such malpractice and repeats the offence, irrespective of subject, will be reported to the Head of Grade. The teacher/Head of Department will provide a report and evidence of the malpractice. The Head of Grade will investigate the concern and interview the student as per College guidelines (See 10:13 Guidelines for Interviewing Students on Disciplinary Issues). Should malpractice be confirmed, the student will be referred to the Vice Principal Pastoral/High School Principal for serious disciplinary action.
Repeat offences of academic dishonesty are likely to lead to suspension and in the unlikely event of extensive malpractice across a range of pieces or subjects, is likely to result in exclusion from the College.

d. Malpractice in work which is not coursework - If there is evidence of malpractice in a piece of work (not coursework) it will be at the discretion of the teacher/ HoD whether the student is required to redo the work (it will not be graded).

e. Malpractice in coursework - If there is evidence of malpractice in coursework, the student will have to resubmit the work. This resubmitted work will be undertaken under the close supervision of the teacher/ HoD/ or HOG.

f. Examination Board Sanctions – coursework submitted to the IGCSE/ GCSE/ IB Examination Boards will be subject to the relevant Boards’ scrutiny. If the Board discovers evidence of malpractice, students will face the Board’s sanctions. This can lead to failed subjects or in the case of the IB, a failed Diploma.

g. Other possible consequences: In addition to the above, any Senior School student at the College who has faced serious disciplinary action, such as a suspension due to malpractice, should be aware that the College will be obliged to report this information to universities that may require it. At present, a large number of universities in the USA require schools to report this kind of information, along with an explanation of the circumstances that led to the disciplinary action.

Referencing

12. In the main, students should follow the MLA system of referencing, unless directed otherwise by the subject teacher. Full details of the MLA system are on the College Web site and in student planners. Simply stated MLA referencing is as follows:

   Writer/Title/Place of Publication/Publisher/Date/Pages

Grades 6 to 8
   • Where information or ideas have been included from other published sources the sources are listed at the end of the presentation/report. Any direct quotations are indicated as such with quotation marks. By the end of Grade 8 these should be arranged in alphabetical order.

Grades 9 & 10
   • Where information or ideas have been included from other published sources, the sources are linked to the relevant reference or extract using MLA; footnotes are an acceptable means of doing so.

Grades 11 &12
   • Where information or ideas have been included from other published sources the sources are thoroughly and systematically acknowledged using the MLA system and footnotes.

Advice on how to investigate possible malpractice:

13. It can be very useful to ask students to complete a piece of writing in the classroom at an early stage in the course. This can be kept and used for comparison purposes should you have subsequent doubts about a piece of work completed as homework.

14. Check the work through turn-it-in.com before speaking to the student concerned. Be aware that should turn-it-in not report a match, then the work could have been completed with the help of another student, parent, or tutor.
15. Conduct a Vive Voce with the student. Ask the student to explain their findings; their basic argument; particular phrases or words; or in the case of art, the techniques used to produce the final piece.

16. If in doubt, seek a second opinion – possibly the Head of Department, or a teacher in the department who has taught the student fairly recently.

17. Give the student a chance to re-produce the work under close supervision.