

## ***Commitment to Academic Honesty***

### ***Background***

The Irvine Unified School District has from its inception placed an emphasis on ethical behavior and academic honesty. The Board adoption of core ethical values of **Honesty, Responsibility, Compassion, Perseverance, Respectfulness, Cooperation, Civic Duty, and Courage** reflect this emphasis. The Board further affirms its policy that honest behavior is a responsibility shared by the school and the home, and that academic dishonesty is to be abhorred in all its forms.

Students and parents cite several factors and perceptions that contribute to increased incidents of academic dishonesty:

- academic environments that are increasingly rigorous and competitive,
- access to information on the Internet that can be easily copied into another document,
- parental expectations for high achievement,
- competing time demands of other legitimate activities,
- assignments that are too difficult or not helpful in learning,
- competition for good grades,
- everyone is doing it.

While these factors may help us understand certain behavior, none can serve as an excuse for academic dishonesty.

In the absence of academic honesty, it is impossible to assess student learning and assign accurate grades and to ensure that honest students are not at a competitive disadvantage. The Board expects that classroom practices will reward honest behavior, discourage dishonest behavior, reflect reasonable preventative measures, and protect the rights of the majority of students who are consistently honest.

### ***Commitments***

To realize our goals for academic honesty will require collaboration and commitment among the school, the teachers, parents, and students. Each must do their part.

#### **Parent Commitment**

- Dialogue with family members about academic honesty including cheating, plagiarism, etc.
- State clear expectations regarding conformance to the school's academic honesty policy
- Monitor homework to be sure students are doing their own, and not copying from friends
- Help and encourage students with school work, but never do it for them
- Notify instructors regarding concerns about classroom honesty
- Read, understand and abide by your school's academic honesty policy

#### **Student Commitment**

- Do your own work unless otherwise directed by teacher

- Complete each daily homework assignment with a focus on what is to be learned
- Refrain from acts of academic dishonesty
- Do not take credit for work done by anyone else
- Refuse to aid any form of academic dishonesty
- Read, understand, and abide by your school's academic honesty policy

### **Teacher Commitment**

- Routinely, regularly reinforce the academic honesty expectations with students
- Set clear (written) academic honesty expectations for various types of homework assignments
- Establish an environment that promotes academic honesty during testing
- Actively look for suspicious behavior
- Enforce the district and school academic honesty policies
- Promote and model core ethical values
- Make assignments that provide necessary practice for valuable learning
- Assign work that is intentionally focused on what is to be learned

### ***Consequences***

Consequences for infractions may include a failing mark in the assignment, a failing mark in the course, forwarding the information to colleges, and/or refusal to write college recommendations.

### ***Definition of Terms***

**Cheating:** the use of notes, documents or answers during tests, or the copying of one student's completed assignments or answers by another; allowing another to do the same; or having access to information such as formulas or calculations, notes, etc., except where expressly allowed.

Giving or receiving limited help in trouble-shooting a part of an assignment is not normally considered cheating. However, allowing another student to write any part of an assignment, copying another's file or assignment, and excessive collaboration on assignments are all considered cheating (unless specifically approved otherwise). The student providing such assistance is considered to be cheating as well. Never allow another student to look at your assignment nor to borrow your electronic file.

It is also considered cheating for a student to have access to unauthorized information designed to assist during a test. Having access to an answer or related information in whatever form, whether or not it is used, is considered cheating.

**Plagiarism:** the use of another's words, ideas, or creative productions without assigning credit to the original source

To plagiarize is to take ideas or words of another person and pass them off as one's own. In short, it is stealing something intangible rather than an object. Obviously, it is not necessary to state the source of well known or easily verifiable facts. But students are expected to acknowledge the sources of ideas and expressions they use in their written work, whether those expressions are quoted directly or paraphrased. To provide adequate documentation is not only an indication of academic honesty, but also a courtesy which enables the reader to consult your sources with ease. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

It is also considered plagiarism and/or cheating if a student submits a paper written in whole or in part by someone other than himself or herself, or copies the answer or answers of another student in any test, examination or take-home assignment.

### **Reducing Unnecessary Academic Pressure**

There is no question that the pressure students face with regard to academic success continues to escalate. More and more students are attempting to balance multiple, high-commitment experiences than ever before. It is common to see young people juggling the challenges of several Advance Placement courses along with the demands of family, high school activities and athletics. Frequently other valuable experiences like community service, church and even part-time employment also contribute to the time crunch.

Colleges, from the public college and university system to the most competitive of the private universities, contribute to this pressure by admitting those students who outshined their peers the year before. While many students attempt to meet these spiraling demands, more and more are being confronted with the harsh reality that successful performance diminishes when the balance between school, extra-curricular activity, and family is not maintained.

For many families and students, the fear at the source of this stress may be more imagined than real. In point of fact, it is not uncommon for students who display a balanced high school experience that might include three AP courses, consistent commitment to one team sport or performing group, and a community-based activity, to be admitted to highly competitive universities.

While it is natural to gauge one's competitiveness by a look at the schedules and successes of one's peers, it is vital to regularly reflect upon the appropriateness of the level of challenge being undertaken. The goal is to adopt a workload that is personally and academically challenging, balanced with respect to classroom and other school and community activities, and manageable relative to the time demands.

Students and their families are encouraged to set aside time for planning, monitoring, and modifying a high school program at regular intervals. Questions relating to course workload must be examined in the context of a student's overall day or week. The advice and counsel of school counselors, school psychologists, administrators, teachers, and advisors can be invaluable.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

Modern Language Association Citation Example.

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Technology PathFinder, June 1998

Golden West College Catalog – General Information

[www.vwc.edu/library\\_tech/wwwpages/kames/honesty.htm](http://www.vwc.edu/library_tech/wwwpages/kames/honesty.htm)

Northern Virginia Community College