



Brentwood School

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM POLICY

What is academic honesty? What is plagiarism?

Brentwood School is fully committed to the principles of academic honesty, authenticity and integrity. Academically honest, authentic work is that based on one's own individual and original ideas, expressed in one's own words, except when quoting from a particular source which is then referenced appropriately. Acknowledging when one has used another's ideas shows integrity, gratitude and responsibility. Producing work in an academically honest manner is both morally right and practically a more effective way of learning.

We use the IBO's definition of plagiarism: plagiarism is "the representation of the ideas or work of another person as your own."¹ Plagiarism is a form of deception and a form of cheating.

Including plagiarised material in an assignment contravenes the regulations for public examinations and is also against the spirit in which work is undertaken at the School.

Copying a section of text from a website or book without acknowledging the source, whether by pasting it into a new document or writing the passage out by hand, constitutes plagiarism. Similarly, copying and pasting a section of text then changing a few words for synonyms, so the structure and ideas remain completely the same, also constitutes plagiarism. When comparing a student's work with the original some duplication of the development of an argument may be apparent, but it is not permissible for the two to match sentence for sentence (even with the wording changed) for any great distance.

It is never acceptable to begin a piece of work with a pasted piece of text, even if the intention is then to edit it. Rather, students should use their understanding of the text they have read to present ideas in their own words and style. All homework and coursework must be entirely in a student's own words, except where they are quoting from another source, appropriately referenced.

Responsibilities and sanctions

When assessing students' work (in all year groups at the School), teachers have a responsibility to look out for signs of plagiarism, to investigate and to follow up suspicions where they have them and to impose sanctions where appropriate.

Any plagiarism relating to material for public examinations, including internally assessed coursework (whether written work or oral presentations), is treated extremely seriously. If plagiarism is identified by an examination board, rather than the School, a student can be disqualified from that subject or all subjects taken with that examination board; the School as a Centre could also be investigated for malpractice thereby jeopardising other students in the cohort. Coursework that appears to include plagiarised material must always be

¹ International Baccalaureate Organization. (2009) Academic Honesty. p.3

referred to the Head of Department and Head of Year, and the Deputy Head (Academic) informed. A typical sanction will be a three-hour Saturday Headmaster's Detention for all parties involved. The pieces of work need to be re-done.

Less serious incidents of plagiarism e.g. a student in the Second Form copying a homework, pasting sections of text from an uncredited internet source, indeed any other situation where a student is representing the ideas or work of another person as their own, should be dealt with by the class teacher. The class teacher should use their judgement to decide whether the piece of work should be re-done and whether a Department Detention or a Year Detention is appropriate. If a teacher is unsure whether a particular incident should be treated as "extremely serious" or "less serious", they should check with the relevant Head of Year.

The School uses the online plagiarism-checking website Viper - <https://www.scanmyessay.com/>. This has the facility to check uploaded documents against all online sources (including webpages, scanned books, and essays that have been submitted by other users). Important pieces of work, including all Sixth Form coursework, should be uploaded to this system as a way of verifying the authenticity of the work.

When setting coursework tasks, and collecting final submissions to be sent to examiners, teachers should remind students of the consequences and sanctions of academic dishonesty, outlined above: that they may be disqualified from the subject, or from all exams with that exam board, and that the School may be subject to review as a Centre. Students sign a document to confirm that all work submitted to examination boards for assessment is their own work, except for ideas which have been cited and referenced appropriately. Students are also briefed thoroughly on honest conduct in public examinations, in advance of those public examinations, and warned of the consequences of dishonest conduct in the examinations, in terms of being disqualified from that subject or from all exams with that examination board.

Promoting academic honesty and good practice

All students in the Lower Sixth Form attend an interactive presentation on plagiarism and academic honesty. Social sciences research undertaken by Dee and Jacob shows that educating students about plagiarism, by having them attend a single short interactive workshop, dramatically decreases the incidence of plagiarism.² This is partly because students become more aware of what constitutes plagiarism and also how to cite sources legitimately (students all know that plagiarism is wrong, though not always what does and what does not constitute plagiarism). Such programmes are also effective because reminding people about morality makes them behave more honestly. Psychology professor Dan Ariely demonstrates through his empirical studies that simply priming an individual with thoughts about morality decreases subsequent incidence of cheating behaviour.³

Students in all year groups, from First Form to Upper Sixth, should be encouraged to cite all sources and if they quote information from a website or author they should attribute this to that website or author. The manner and presentation of citations needs to be more formal in Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Form. In some assessments, for example the IB Extended Essay, citations and bibliography are required to be in an approved format and students are given guidance on this.

At the start of each academic year, classroom teachers should remind all the students in each of their classes about the importance of academically honest work practices (and about the consequences of plagiarism and cheating), as an explicit clarification of expectations. Teachers should also remind students about academically honest work practices, in terms

² Dee, T. S. & Jacob, B. A. (2012) Rational ignorance in education: A field experiment in student plagiarism. *Journal of Human Resources*, 47, 397-434. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15672.pdf>, accessed 17th December 2014.

³ Ariely, D. (2009) Our buggy moral code. http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_on_our_buggy_moral_code.html, accessed 17th December 2014.

of how to use sources appropriately, when setting research tasks in class or for homework. The importance of academic honesty is explained, clarified and emphasised each year in Year Group assemblies by Heads of Year.

When they are not directly or indirectly quoting a source (and acknowledging they are doing so), students should be encouraged to use their understanding of the text they have read to then present ideas in their own words and style.