



Brentwood School

Academic Integrity Policy

Document Owner:	Deputy Head (Academic) Senior & Deputy Head (Academic) Prep		
Relevant to:	Whole School		
Regulatory Body:	International Baccalaureate Organisation; JCQ		
Relevant Legislation/Guidance:	IBO: Programme Standards and Practices (2020); JCQ: AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications, Revision 2 (2025); IBO: Academic Integrity Policy (2025).		
Last approved by and date:	SLT 9th October 2025		
Last Updated:	September 2025		
Next review due:	May 2030		
Current version published:	7th November 2025		
Circulation:	All Staff	Governors	Website
Related & supporting Policies:	Admissions Policy	Assessment Policy	Behaviour policy
	Curriculum Policy	Equal Opportunities Policy	Languages Policy
	Progression Policy	Teaching & Learning Policy	Public Examinations suite of policies
	AI Guiding Principles		

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY¹

What is academic integrity and why is it important?

Brentwood School's values of 'Virtue, Learning, and Manners' enable students to be the best version of themselves and a part of this will be upholding academic integrity in their time at School. The Learner Profile characteristic of 'principled' includes upholding academic integrity. Academic integrity is an obligation that must be embraced and fostered by the whole school community including the Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff, operational staff, students, and parents. With the growth in the use of Generative AI, it is even more pertinent to promote an ethical culture that incorporates academic integrity.

Virtue

Academic integrity is a guiding principle in education and a choice to act in a responsible way whereby others can have trust in us as individuals. It is about doing the right thing when no one is looking. Academic integrity is essential in the creation of academically honest work and is morally right. Assessments can only be fair if all students are provided with an equal opportunity; and to be valid, they need to provide an accurate reflection of a student's achievement. Any act that undermines this fairness by students engaging in academic misconduct or schools committing maladministration will create a disadvantage for those who have complied with the rules. Academic integrity means that academic work is undertaken in a way that maintains fairness and sustains trust and credibility.

Learning

Creating work authentically is practically a more effective way of learning. Academically honest, authentic work is 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.

Manners

Academic integrity helps develop gratitude and respect for others. Students who understand how knowledge is built will understand that it is acceptable to use the ideas, words or work of others. However, following good academic practice it is expected that information is appropriately acknowledged. Everyone has the right to own their intellectual property and we all have a responsibility to respect others' work. Acknowledging when one has used another's ideas shows integrity, gratitude and responsibility.

¹ The IBO requires that the Senior School has an Academic Integrity Policy as part of the Standards and Practices relating to Brentwood being an IB World School; the policy is not a regulatory requirement for ISI inspection.

Expectations are clearly communicated and modelled at an age-appropriate level so that all students in the School understand:

- their responsibility for producing authentic and genuine individual and group work;
- how to correctly attribute sources, acknowledging the work and ideas of others;
- the responsible use of information technology, including web search and AI, and social media;
- how to observe and adhere to ethical and honest practice during examinations.

Failures of academic integrity can be separated into three categories: stealing, muddying, and cheating. Stealing is taking another's contribution to human understanding and presenting it as your own. Muddying is obscuring where an idea started, making it harder for readers to trace it back to detailed evidence or argumentation: one might say bad epistemic hygiene. Cheating is not the same thing as stealing: a student who buys a paper from an essay mill has cheated, but nothing has been stolen. Indeed, cheating is the main issue in most cases of students' failures in academic integrity. This is because student work usually isn't expected to make original contributions to scholarship. Students are still learning; their writing serves mainly as a marker of their progress rather than a vehicle for novel insights. In this context, the most significant problems are where the student is cheating the system. The School's approach and sanctions are alert to the difference between muddying and cheating: whereas muddying could be reproducing text or ideas without attribution due to poor scholarship practices or ignorance of how to do the right thing, cheating is the deliberate attempt to deceive i.e. knowingly not do the right thing, in order to obtain an unfair advantage.²

JCQ guidelines state: "poor referencing, paraphrasing and copying sections of text may constitute malpractice, which can attract severe sanctions including disqualification – in the context of AI use, students must be clear what is and what is not acceptable in respect of acknowledging AI content and the use of AI sources."³

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 misconduct. Similarly, copying and pasting a section of text and then changing a few words for synonyms, so the structure and ideas remain completely the same, also constitutes misconduct. 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

² Regina Rini, "Borrowed Lines: Stealing, Muddying, Cheating", *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 January 2024.

³ JCQ: *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*. (2025). p.7

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.

As a School, we encourage students to make use of referencing in both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. While we do not compel students to use an exact method, we recommend students make use of either Harvard (in-text)⁴ or Oxford (footnote)⁵ styles and provide support on how to do this to all Year 11 students and all Lower Sixth students.

With the growth of Generative AI, it is important to establish what is research and what is misconduct. If making use of tools such as ChatGPT, it is important to acknowledge the source in their work (using standard referencing methods), to avoid any lack of clarity as to the origin of it. Any use of Generative AI without suitable acknowledgement is treated as misconduct.⁶

Generative AI needs to be treated like any other source and therefore any sentences, large segments of text or entire passages submitted as a student's own work must be their own and not generated by any AI tool. The school makes proactive use of AI checkers using a variety of tools (e.g. Turnitin) and should a member of staff suspect the hidden use of AI, they will make use of these tools and discuss any concerns with the student.

Academic integrity is also vital in public examinations and in internal school examinations and tests. It is never acceptable to cheat or attempt to obtain an unfair advantage in any examination or test. Examples of academic misconduct in examinations include, but are not limited to, concealing notes or an unauthorised electronic device in one's pocket, even if one is not seen using them; copying or attempting to copy from another candidate; attempting to obtain copies of an examination paper in advance of that examination.

Teachers must uphold the principles of academic integrity in their conduct too. If the actions of a teacher potentially threatens the integrity of examinations or assessments, this is technically 'maladministration', rather than 'malpractice'. For example, a subject teacher who provides excessive assistance to their students during the coursework production process may be committing maladministration in an involuntary and/or well-intentioned manner. Exam board specifications and regulations provide clear information about what is or is not considered acceptable. If a teacher provides multiple edits to students' work in contradiction to the instructions of the exam board specification or regulations for their qualification might mean this extra help gives an unfair advantage to the student and could be

⁴ How to reference with Harvard, University of York, July 2023:

<https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/referencing-style-guides/harvard>

⁵ Guide for referencing with Oxford style, Victoria University, May 2023:

<https://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/oxford-referencing/getting-started-with-oxford-referencing>

⁶ JCQ: *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*. (2025)

'maladministration'. This would contravene the ethical culture shaped around Virtue, Learning and Manners, through which work is undertaken at the School.

Promoting academic integrity and good practice

Students at both the Prep and Senior Schools are taught a variety of practices related to academic integrity such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility, both directly and indirectly. All teachers are responsible for embedding academic integrity into their lessons and the School's expectations should be outlined at the beginning of the year.

Teachers explain to students the reasons why academic integrity is important and what it means to be honest when completing work. They help students understand what it means to appreciate the thoughts and words of others, and take responsibility for their own actions and words. Teachers model good practice in academic integrity for students whilst teaching and in presentations, for example acknowledging and citing sources.

Students in all year groups, from Year 3 to Upper Sixth, are taught how to locate, select, paraphrase and summarise information. Students from Year 3 to Upper Sixth should take responsibility for sharing where they find information, images, ideas and words of others. They are 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 need to be more formal in Year 11 and Sixth Form. In some assessments, for example, the IB Extended Essay or the EPQ, citations and bibliography are required to be in an approved format and students are given guidance on this. Students completing a piece of extended research such as the HPQ, EPQ, or IB Extended Essay will have taught sessions on academic referencing and the importance of acknowledging sources and others' work.

At the start of each academic year, classroom teachers should remind all the students in each of their classes about the importance of academic integrity (and about the consequences of misconduct and cheating), as an explicit clarification of expectations. Teachers should also remind students about academically honest work practices, in terms of how to use sources appropriately, when setting research tasks in class or for homework. The importance of academic integrity 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 present ideas in their own words and style.

All students in the Lower Sixth attend an interactive presentation on academic integrity. Social sciences research shows that educating students about academic integrity, by having them attend a single short interactive workshop, dramatically decreases the incidence of

misconduct.⁷ This is partly because students become more aware of what constitutes misconduct and also how to cite sources legitimately (students all know that misconduct is wrong, though not always what does and what does not constitute misconduct). As a School we promote Virtue among students, encouraging them to do the right thing when no one is looking. This is a key principle when it comes to academic integrity and through the workshops and character education, we lower the likelihood of student misconduct.

At parent talks, for instance introductory evenings at the start of the academic year, parents are briefed about supporting their children in demonstrating academic integrity in their learning at home, and ensuring that home learning is done by the child and not another person.

Responsibilities and sanctions

When assessing students' work (in all year groups at the School), teachers have a responsibility to look out for signs of misconduct. They should try to understand the context and reasons behind the academic misconduct by meeting with the student. They should issue sanctions where appropriate and address the reasons that caused the misconduct.

Any misconduct relating to material for public examinations, including internally assessed coursework (whether written work or oral presentations), is treated extremely seriously. If misconduct 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.

There are various forms of misconduct and they all come with their own context, seriousness and place on the sanctions ladder. For lower-level offences and those who are not deliberately trying to deceive their teacher ("muddying", to use the terminology above), a sanction would not be the best action. Rather, the student requires support and education on the issue to prevent the offence from happening again. This would be the most likely approach in the Prep School, where the emphasis is necessarily on nurturing an understanding of the values and practices that are the foundation of academic integrity. The teacher may ask for the work to be done again or amended, such that sources or ideas are acknowledged and attributed, in order to uphold the principles of academic integrity.

When a sanction is required, staff need to ensure they liaise with the appropriate Head of Year, Head of Department, the Director of Pastoral Care and Wellbeing (Y7 to Y11), Director of

⁷ Perkins, M., Gezgin, U. B., & Roe, J. (2020) Reducing plagiarism through academic misconduct education. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 16, 3. Available at: <https://edintegrity.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1007/s40979-020-00052-8>, accessed 20th September 2023.

Curriculum (PYP Coordinator), Director of IBDP or the Director of Sixth Form. As per the sanctions ladder, our sanctions are not fixed and they should be informed by teacher judgement, while also proportionate to the severity of the offence. Cases of academic dishonesty will be dealt with on a one to one basis with the aim of ensuring that the person involved can learn from their mistakes and move on positively without prejudicial treatment. For support with this process, the below can be used as a rough guide for sanctions:

- For a student intentionally attempting to deceive using unquoted sources or Generative AI to write their general work (classwork or homework),
 - KS3: 30-minute teacher/department-level sanction with the focus being on educating the student and having a dialogue with them about the issues with academic integrity.
 - KS4/ KS5: 1-hour after-school sanction – with the focus being on educating the student and having a dialogue with them about the issues with academic integrity.
 - A second offence by a student would require escalating the sanction to either 1-hour detention (KS3) or 3-hour Saturday Headmaster's Detention (KS4/KS5).
- For student misconduct with respect to a more significant piece of work e.g. internal exams, HPQ, EPQ, IB Extended Essay, Coursework, NEA – a 3-hour Saturday detention (subject to approval from a member of the Senior Leadership Team) is appropriate.
- There may be instances which are more serious than the first bullet-point, but less serious than the second. This might be where a 1-hour after-school detention can be issued by either the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Coursework that appears to include suspect material must always be referred to the Head of Department and Head of Year, and the Deputy Head Academic informed. A typical sanction will be a 3-hour Saturday Headmaster's Detention for all parties involved. The pieces of work need to be redone.

The School uses online plagiarism-checking software, including Originality Reports in Google Classroom, AI checkers and the website Turnitin. This has the facility to check uploaded documents against all online sources (including Generative AI, web pages, scanned books, and essays that have been submitted by other users). The TurnitinUK AI checker is also a tool that can rate the AI contribution to the work. It can be used to ascertain whether generative AI has been utilised on a piece of work. This must be used for all coursework, project work and assignments in both KS4 and KS5 as a way of verifying the authenticity of the work. In addition to this, we advise that all electronic coursework is shared with the supervisor from the start, for them to have edit access and view the edit history of the document(s).

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.

Suspected cheating or malpractice in an internal examination or test will be referred to the Head of Year, in the first instance, who will investigate. A typical sanction for students found to have cheated is to be awarded a mark of zero for that exam and also issued with a 3-hour Saturday Headmaster's Detention for all parties involved. The student(s) may need to re-take the examination, at the discretion of the Head of Year, in discussion with the relevant academic Head of Department.

Students are briefed thoroughly on honest conduct and the consequences of dishonest conduct or malpractice in public examinations, in advance of those public examinations. Any student suspected of malpractice in a public examination is reported to the School Examinations Officer (and the Director of IB, for IB Diploma examinations), who will inform the Headmaster and Deputy Head Academic. Any instance of malpractice is investigated and reported to the examination board, in accordance with JCQ or IBO regulations. A typical sanction for a student deemed to have acted dishonestly by a public examination board is to be disqualified from that component or qualification with that examination board.