



Policy

Academic Honesty

The chief aim of Oakham School is to be an 'outstanding community of learners'. Learning is acquired through study and experience: any form of cheating or malpractice in an academic context is a denial of that process, is contrary to the mission and the spirit of the school, and is potentially highly damaging to the individual concerned, to the wider community of the school, and beyond.

Categories of academic dishonesty include:

- *Plagiarism*: this is defined as the practice of taking the work or ideas of another and representing them as one's own; it may be deliberate or inadvertent, with the latter possibly arising from, for example, inadequate citation of sources
- *Collusion*: this is defined as a secret agreement to work together with the intention of passing off work as that produced by one person
- *Misconduct or malpractice*: this is any practice used to gain an unfair advantage in any assignment or examination – it could include taking unauthorised materials into an examination room, getting unauthorised help from another in producing work, using a mobile phone in test conditions, and so on

The spirit of this policy is to help ensure the education of all of our students in the matter of academic honesty so, whilst there is an inevitable focus on procedures and protocol, it should be borne in mind that discussion and reflection should come ahead of sanction if that is in the best interests of the student.

The responsibilities of the school

The school educates students about academic honesty and encourages appropriate practice by:

- enforcing IBO and JCQ regulations in examination rooms
- providing students with copies of JCQ materials relating to examination conduct and academic honesty
- enforcing similar regulations in internal exams, formal tests and project work
- formally teaching the research process through the FOSIL framework
- providing support, through the Library and elsewhere, for students engaged in academic work or research
- providing opportunities for students to practise academic honesty in all disciplines and with a sophistication increasing in a fashion appropriate to the students
- providing a wide range of age-appropriate scholarly sources
- ensuring that students are aware of their responsibilities
- ensuring that teachers are aware of and trained in the school's expectations relating to academic honesty

- requiring teachers to use their professional judgement in seeking to educate students, and reporting instances of academic dishonesty where appropriate
- formally investigating reports of academic dishonesty and applying appropriate sanctions

The responsibilities of Heads of Department

- Reminding departmental colleagues of the requirements in relation to academic honesty, particularly when examined coursework or controlled assessment is taking place
- Investigating instances of suspected academic dishonesty according to the procedure below, and alerting the Deputy Head (Academic) in the case of serious breaches
- Ensuring that copies of coursework and controlled assessments are uploaded to turnitin.com

The responsibilities of teachers

- Understanding and modelling the practice of academic honesty, the FOSIL framework and the conventions that apply, including in the production of presentations and handouts
- Providing opportunities for students to practise academic honesty within their subject discipline
- Reminding students of the expectations on them in relation to academic honesty when it is appropriate to the task in hand
- Providing feedback to students in relation to academic honesty
- Being proactive in investigating instances of academic dishonesty, and following the procedure outlined below

The responsibilities of students

Students are expected to:

- be aware of and adhere to rules and expectations relating to academic honesty in public examinations
- acknowledge clearly when they are drawing upon the ideas of others, and to cite sources wherever possible, employing appropriate academic conventions at a level appropriate to their point in school
- avoid plagiarism and collusion in their studies at all times
- consult their teachers when they find themselves in academic difficulty, or if they are unsure about the propriety of their approach
- accept that they are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all work is their own

Staff training

All colleagues will be briefed, at least, every three years on the content of this policy, the expectations of the school and the students, and the academic conventions of the school as represented in FOSIL and other frameworks.

New colleagues will receive such a briefing as part of their induction to the school.

Student training

Students arriving in Forms 1, 3 and 6 will, as part of their normal curriculum, be taught about formal academic research as manifest in FOSIL, and have the opportunity to practise and demonstrate their understanding of this through project work.

Students arriving at other points will be briefed on the school's expectations in regard to academic honesty as part of their induction.

Informing parents

The expectations of the school in relation to academic honesty will be explained to parents as part of the induction sessions at the start of the academic year; the policy will also be available on the school website.

Investigating instances of academic dishonesty

All investigations of academic dishonesty should be conducted in the spirit of this policy, where the compassionate education of the students takes priority. It is not expected or intended that rapid escalation is the norm; any responses should be age-appropriate and proportionate. Often, a 'serious conversation' will be of greater value than an automatic sanction. An attempt must always be made to establish the circumstances leading to the event.

Teachers who suspect a student of academic dishonesty should, in the first instance, address the issues directly with the student. If this appears to be more than a relatively minor matter (such as low-level copying of non-examination work), the incident should be reported to the relevant Head of Department, and the student's tutor, Housemaster and Head of Section informed. The student should be advised of the potential seriousness of academic dishonesty at this stage. The Head of Department must then investigate and decide whether the incident constitutes a serious incident of plagiarism, misconduct or collusion.

If the body of work is non-departmental or cross-curricular in nature, then the initial investigation should be referred to the Head of Section.

Serious incidents of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the Deputy Head (Academic) or, in their absence, the Director of Teaching and Learning: the Head of Department will provide the relevant evidence to the Deputy Head (Academic), and a formal interview with the student will be conducted by the Deputy Head (Academic), with the tutor in support: the outcome will be a decision as to whether this constitutes wilful misconduct rather than ignorance of academic convention. The Deputy Head (Academic) will contact parents advising them of the situation and decide on the appropriate sanction.

If the instance of academic dishonesty happens as part of the assessment for a formal examination, any applicable JCQ or IBO guidelines will be followed, as well as the appropriate sanction being applied.

Sanctions

A Deputy Head's Detention will be applied in cases of serious deliberate academic dishonesty; this will be accompanied by a letter home from the Deputy Head (Academic).

In the event of malpractice in an internal examination, the student will be additionally be awarded no marks for that paper; however, it will be assessed and feedback provided as is normal.

A Head of Department's Warning, which is focused upon instances where expectations of work or conduct in an academic subject do not meet expectations, is appropriate for persistent low-level academic dishonesty such as copying prep or attempting to cheat in tests.

A 'Think About it Memo' may be appropriate in instances where a more formal sanction would be considered excessive.

An Academic Detention is applied when a student has wilfully failed to complete a piece of work to an appropriate standard, or not handed it in on time: this is not, in general, the correct sanction for deliberate academic dishonesty.

Follow-up

Following an instance of academic dishonesty leading to a sanction, students will be encouraged to recognise their misconduct, to reflect upon its causes, and will be supported in a manner to try to ensure that such incidents are avoided in the future. Records should be kept by teachers, tutors and departments so that persistent problems become apparent and can be addressed appropriately.

Examples

i. *Malpractice in an internal examination*

This is a serious offence which, if repeated in a public examination, could have catastrophic consequences for the individual. Therefore, such instances should always be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic), and a Deputy Head's Detention or Head of Lower School Detention is appropriate.

ii. *Heavily lifting text from one or more websites in a Form 3 Individual Project*

Whilst this undoubtedly constitutes plagiarism, the seriousness of the offence may not be apparent to the student. This should be dealt with through a meeting with the Head of Middle School.

iii. *Cheating in a class test or copying prep*

A first offence of this nature should be dealt with directly by the teacher, perhaps with a 'Think About it Memo' being issued. Persistent offences should be referred to the Head of Department, where a Head of Department's Warning should be issued; further instances after this should then be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic).

iv. *Malpractice in a piece of examined coursework*

This is automatically a serious offence that should be escalated to the Deputy Head (Academic).

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that it stays in line with the most current thinking on academic honesty, and with any developments of school initiatives such as the FOSIL framework.

DAH

July 2016

Review date July 2018

Elements of this policy are based on the Academic Honesty Policy produced by Haileybury School, and it is further informed by the IB publications 'Academic Honesty in the Diploma Programme' and 'Academic Honesty in the IB Educational Context' (2014). It is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence (CC BY-NC-SA).