

WANTAGH HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic Integrity: what it is and why it is important

Academic integrity, scholastic honesty, is essential for the assessment of student learning and the evaluation of teaching practices. We educators need to know what a particular student and a particular class have learned and the extent to which our curriculum and instruction is sound. Academic dishonesty is an obstacle to this intent. Academic integrity is violated when a student obtains credit for, or is evaluated on, work that is not his or her own.

The consequences of academic dishonesty, especially cheating and plagiarism

The two most common forms of academic dishonesty that we encounter in the classroom are cheating and plagiarism. Every student must be informed by both the school and the individual teacher as to what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences of such. When cheating or plagiarism occurs, it is important that the incident be recorded, appropriate school staff and the student's parents be notified, and a grade of F or zero may be assigned. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, punishment could range from zero for that particular piece of student's work, to F for an entire course, or to suspension from class.

Explanation of plagiarism

Plagiarism is using someone else's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own. This "someone else" could be another student, a parent, or an author of printed or electronic material. The words or ideas of another must be properly documented whether they are in the form of a quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary.

Minor and major plagiarism

Plagiarism may be either a minor or major offense. A minor offense occurs when a student, because of ignorance, fails to properly cite copyrighted material. A major offense occurs when a student deliberately and intentionally misrepresents another's (copyrighted) work as his own.

Academic Dishonesty Definitions

Activities, that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following definitions:

- A. Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work or preventing, or attempting to prevent, another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. Example: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam, altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, etc.
- B. Plagiarism: using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.
- C. Fabrication: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data for an experiment, fudging data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.
- D. Multiple submission: submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.
- E. Misrepresentation of academic records: misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record. Example: forging a change of grade slip, tampering with computer records, falsifying academic information on one's college application.
- F. Facilitating academic dishonesty: knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of the Code. Example: working together on a take-home exam, etc.
- G. Unfair advantage: attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Example: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials, obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise, lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper, continuing to write even when time is up during an exam, destroying or keeping library materials for one's own use, etc.

*If a student is unsure whether his action(s) constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student's responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities.

Minor Plagiarism Procedures

If a teacher suspects a student of a minor plagiarism infraction as defined in Wantagh High School's AIP, it is recommended that the teacher and/or department supervisor re-educate the student as to more appropriate behavior.

Major Plagiarism and Cheating Procedures

1. Teacher suspects student of major plagiarism and/or cheating. He/she begins the process by discussing his/her suspicions with the student. Teacher determines whether or not he or she wants to pursue the situation. It is up to the teacher's discretion to decide whether or not to go to step 2.
2. If the teacher decides to pursue the allegations, he or she will send a notice to guidance and the department supervisor outlining his or her suspicions.
3. The teacher will immediately contact the student's parent(s) to inform him or her that he or she is pursuing this matter outlining what he or she plans to do. This decision is up to the teacher's discretion. He or she may give the student a zero, or find an appropriate alternative.
4. This matter will end at this point if the student, parent, and teacher agree on a resolution.
5. If no resolution is reached (OR if this matter becomes an issue regarding a service organization such as the National Honor Society), a meeting will take place between the student, the parent, guidance counselor, and the department supervisor to attempt resolution.
6. If the outcome is not acceptable to all parties, then an Academic Standards Committee will be established to review the matter.

Academic Standards Committee Procedures

1. Five teachers will serve on this committee which will be selected by the principal. The committee will include an English department representative, a representative from the department making the allegation, and three other tenured teachers selected at the principal's discretion.
2. An exploratory hearing will take place in which the committee will hear from the accusing teacher, the student's guidance counselor, and the department supervisor. The committee will then discuss the matter in private and will take an anonymous vote: to continue pursuing the matter or to cease the investigation. The majority decision will determine the next step.
3. If the committee determines that an additional hearing is necessary, witnesses may be asked to meet with the committee. This might include, but not be limited to, the accusing teacher, the department supervisor, the guidance counselor, if applicable, the dean, and if legally permitted, the student and his or her parents. No decision will be made until the committee has heard from all of these essential parties. In the interest of "due process rights," an accused student may ask that other students be allowed to offer testimony.

4. After hearing the entire case, the committee will meet in private to discuss the hearings. An anonymous vote will be taken. The majority decision of guilty or not guilty will determine the outcome.
5. If the parents decide to pursue this matter further, it will move to central administration.

The Effect of a Guilty Verdict for a Major Plagiarism and/or Cheating Offense on Service Organization Membership

1. If a student is a member of a service organization, such as the National Honor Society, a guilty verdict may result in the removal of that student from that organization.
2. If a student wishes to reapply to that organization, he or she may do so under the following provisions. He or she may not rejoin the organization until the next year. He or she must write an essay explaining what he or she learned from his or her past mistakes. The service organization committee will ultimately make its determination. If the student is found guilty of plagiarism after November 1st, he or she may not reapply for the following year, but must wait until a full year of probation has passed.
3. If a student is not a member of the service organization, such as the National Honor Society, but wishes to apply, he or she must wait one full year from the time of the committee's guilty ruling. He or she must submit an essay explaining what he or she learned from his or her past mistakes. If the student is found guilty of plagiarism after November 1st, he or she may not apply for the following year, but must wait until a full year of probation has past.

For repeated offenses, the dean's office will be directly involved.

Disciplinary procedures may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. academic probation (i.e., a period of time, up to one year, during which time the student will work with his teachers and counselors to promote the student's academic integrity in all classes);
- b. Written notification of academic probation from the teacher and a supervisor to the student and his/her parents. Communication also to the guidance counselor and the assistant principal's office.
- c. In-school suspension for one to three days.

Repeated violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may have a significant negative result, impacting on such things as college recommendations, and loss of any award recognition that might normally be expected during the school year.

