

Academic Ethics

HMS Academic Integrity Policy and Consequences

Highland Middle School is committed to working with our community to provide education that empowers our students to demonstrate positive character, ethical decision-making and effective problem solving skills within a rigorous academic environment. HMS supports the district's Very Important Principles (VIP), as these principles encourage our students and staff to demonstrate character that embodies honesty, accountability, integrity, ethical citizenship, respectful relationships and responsibility.

The acceptance of responsibility is ensuring that all academic work, projects, assessments, exams, grades and academic recognition of any kind are a direct reflection of one's own abilities, knowledge, skills, talents and academic growth.

Collaboration is an important component of HMS's academic environment. It is a way to encourage sharing of ideas and abilities to promote the academic growth of all members of the learning community. Working independently is also a productive way for students to learn. It's critically important that students learn how to work together and how to work independently. Collaboration, or "working together," will be specifically authorized by teachers when they assign student work or assessments. Unless specifically authorized by the teacher, students are expected to complete work and assessments independently. If an assignment requires the student to work independently, then "working together" becomes a form of cheating. Whether working independently or collaboratively, all students are responsible for the quality and integrity of the work submitted. If clarification or assistance is needed on an assignment, the student is responsible for seeking timely assistance from a teacher prior to the due date of the assignment. Submission of an assignment or assessment indicates the student understood the expectations and did not require further assistance.

Webster defines cheating as "using unfair or dishonest methods to gain an advantage; engaging in fraud or trickery." Plagiarism is defined as "pass[ing] off [the ideas or words of another] as one's own; use [of another's product] without crediting the source. To commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include but are not limited to:

- "Working together" on an independent project/assignment/assessment
- Plagiarism
- Using any electronic device without teacher permission (i. e., phones, graphing calculators, computers, smart watches, electronics that take pictures/recordings/store or access information) in testing areas

- Obtaining/providing an unfair advantage; receiving credit for skills/ knowledge not possessed or demonstrated (i. e., sharing test questions)
- Copying material/computer files/work/assessments from others
- Allowing student(s) to copy materials/computer files/work/assessments
- Self-plagiarism or multiple submissions of work for different classes
- Fabrication – receiving credit for cited work in which the information has been falsified by the student
- Using unauthorized notes, aids or written material during a test
- Talking or communicating during a test
- Forgery of signature
- Taking/using/accessing/sharing unauthorized material (i. e. tests, quiz questions, etc.)

Responsibilities of Students:

- Exercise academic integrity in all aspects of their work
- View the school's Academic Integrity PowerPoint
- Discuss the Academic Integrity Policy with parent, sign, and return to LA teacher
- Prepare sufficiently for all types of assessments
- Seek extra help from teachers when needed
- Avoid engaging in cheating, plagiarizing, and lying
- Use sources in the prescribed manner

Responsibilities of Teachers:

- Develop, model, and sustain ethical practices within the classroom setting
- Report violations of the Academic Integrity Policy to administrators
- Confer with those who violate the Academic Integrity Policy
- Contact the student's parent/guardian regarding a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy

Responsibilities of Parents:

- Discuss the Academic Integrity Policy with their child to ensure understanding
- Sign the Academic Integrity Policy after discussing with their student (PowerPoint available for parent viewing on 8Red webpage)
- Encourage their child to maintain high standards with regard to integrity, honesty, and personal responsibility

- Support faculty and administration in enforcing Academic Integrity Policy

Responsibility of Administrators:

- Ensure that the faculty, students and parents receive the Academic Integrity Policy (on 8Red website)
- Help contribute to a school-wide environment that encourages adherence to the Academic Integrity Policy
- Require teachers to enforce the Academic Integrity Policy
- Maintain accurate records of Academic Integrity Policy violations in PowerSchool
- **Ensure that the Academic Integrity Policy is applied consistently**

Consequences of Plagiarism or Cheating:

- A zero for the assignment (homework is teacher's discretion; multiple or serious infractions handled by administration)
- Behavior consequences may range from detention to out of school suspension
- Parents are notified of academic misconduct by teacher and/or administration