



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

## Academic Honesty Policy

Policy # 209a

15 March 2012

### I. Academic Honesty and Malpractice

The IB Learner Profile describes the kind of individual whom both the school and IB aim to develop, regardless of whether they are studying for the IB. According to the Profile, IB learners strive to be “Principled: They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities.” In an educational setting, whether it be a school or a university, integrity and honesty are expected in academic matters in particular. It is the responsibility of teachers and the school administration to provide a setting in which academic honesty is respected, but also to deal with cases where there has been malpractice.

Because of what people are increasingly used to outside the school, it is often not easy for students to fully appreciate the meaning and value of academic honesty and to understand when they are guilty of malpractice.

Academic honesty simply means that any ideas or formulations that one claims, or implies, are one’s own are indeed fully one’s own, and that one not try to gain an unfair advantage over others in any assessed activity, or try to disadvantage them in any way. When there is breach of academic honesty, it is considered malpractice. Most commonly, “malpractice includes

- plagiarism: this is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the candidate’s own,

[Note that plagiarism needs to be understood in a wide sense: it includes any use of a text without acknowledging the source – to avoid plagiarism, it is not enough to change a few words, or slightly rephrase it, or translate it into another language.]

- collusion: this is defined as supporting malpractice by another candidate, as in allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another,
- duplication of work: this is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or diploma requirements,
- any other behaviour that gains an unfair advantage for a candidate or that affects the results of another candidate (for example, taking unauthorized material into an examination room, misconduct during an examination, falsifying a CAS record).”

“However, there are other ways in which a candidate may commit malpractice and in so doing be in



breach of the Regulations. The following examples of malpractice do not constitute an exhaustive list and refer only to the written examinations:

- taking unauthorized material into an examination room (such as cell/mobile phone, written notes),
- leaving and/or accessing unauthorized material in a bathroom/restroom that may be visited during an examination,
- misconduct during an examination, including any attempt to disrupt the examination or distract another candidate,
- exchanging information or in any way supporting the passing on of information to another candidate about the content of an examination,
- failing to comply with the instructions of the invigilator or other member of the school's staff responsible for the conduct of the examination,
- impersonating another candidate,
- stealing examination papers,
- using an unauthorized calculator during an examination, or using a calculator when one is not permitted for the examination paper,
- disclosing or discussing the content of an examination paper with a person outside the immediate school community within 24 hours after the examination. [This last part applies to the external IGCSE and IB exams.]”

It should be noted that in all these cases, to be guilty of malpractice, it is not necessary that the behaviour has been intentional. When one is found with a cell phone in an exam, it is no excuse to say that one has not used it and was not planning to use it.

## II. Good Practice

It is very important that students get to understand about intellectual property and academic honesty from an early age. While the following points apply mostly at IB level, they should gradually be introduced from much earlier: even small children can know that “cheating is wrong.”

1. All of a student's work is required to be authentic. “An authentic piece of work is one that is based on the candidate's individual and original ideas with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Therefore, all assignments for assessment, regardless of their format, must wholly and authentically use that candidate's own language, expression and ideas.”
2. On the other hand, “using the words and ideas of another person to support one's arguments is a fundamental part of any academic endeavour, and how to integrate these words and ideas with one's own is an important skill that must be taught.”

“Where the ideas or work of another person are represented within a candidate's work, whether in the form of direct quotation or paraphrase, [even if translated into a different

language] the source(s) of those ideas or the work must be fully and appropriately acknowledged. This requirement includes a candidate's responses to examination papers in May and/or November. All quotations in a candidate's examination script must be properly acknowledged."

Students must use footnotes, or some other clear and consistent way, to acknowledge their sources and they must include in each piece of work a bibliography in one of the standard formats. "When using the words of another person it must become habitual practice for a candidate to use quotation marks, indentation or some other accepted means of indicating that the wording is not their own. Furthermore, the source of the quotation (or paraphrased text) must be clearly identified along with the quotation and not reside in the bibliography alone."

Students should submit work, and in particular work that is any part of their assessment, through the TurnItIn website, to which the school has a subscription. This will give them, and their teachers, an indication of any problems, including any unintentional use of another person's material.

3. Collaboration between students is often allowed, and may sometimes even be required, so working together constructively and productively is an important skill for students to learn.

Collusion on the other hand is a form of malpractice. "Candidates may not understand the difference between collaboration and collusion, and therefore require guidance. Collaboration may be loosely defined as working together on a common aim with shared information, which is an open and cooperative behaviour that does not result in 'allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another'.

### III. GHA: Roles and Responsibilities

Academic honesty should be supported by everyone so that it becomes part of the 'atmosphere' of the school. There is always a danger that in some groups at the school some forms of academic dishonesty may become acceptable, so it is essential to be vigilant.

1. Each student is expected to work with the school in upholding the spirit as well as the letter of this Policy, in completing all school-related quizzes, tests, exams, projects, reports, homework or in-class assignments. This policy applies to all the work a student does.
2. Parents are expected to support the ideas of this Policy, by reviewing it with their son or daughter, and encouraging them to practise academic honesty at all times. While parents may of course help their child by explaining class material and homework, their contribution should not be passed on as the student's own work.
3. Teachers are expected to review this Policy with their students at the beginning of each term, and at other times as appropriate, for instance when giving a major assignment. When students do not fully understand the ideas expressed in this Policy, or do not yet have the necessary skills, teachers are expected to explain and teach these.

Teachers are also expected to be aware of the possibility of academic dishonesty and to

enforce this Policy in all instances of malpractice, following the disciplinary process outlined below.

As in other areas, teachers are expected to set a good example to students, so they should practise academic honesty in their own working, including the preparation of their teaching materials.

4. The administration is expected to ensure that students, parents and teachers are fully aware of what this Policy contains and that it is the standard practice at the school. This includes taking appropriate action in all instances of malpractice, following the disciplinary process outlined below.

All teachers should have a copy of this Policy, and students and their parents should be required to sign a brief version of it.

#### IV. GHA: Disciplinary Action

For academic honesty to be standard practice at the school, and for students to learn that malpractice is not acceptable, it is necessary to take firm action in any case of an infraction of this Policy.

When there has been an infraction of the Policy, or an infraction is suspected, the following steps can be taken:

1. The teacher concerned will investigate the matter, and confiscate anything that might constitute evidence, such as scripts or a phone. If an infraction has occurred but is minor, or the student(s) involved are in one of the younger grades, the teacher may choose to handle the matter himself. He or she should talk to the student(s) and explain the seriousness of the matter, with reference to the school's Policy.
2. If the infraction has occurred and it affects one of the formal assessments, like an end-of-term exam, or the student is in grade 10 or above, the teacher should inform the homeroom teacher and a member of the administrative team. The member of the administrative team should receive a written report from the teacher, as well as any evidence there may be.
3. It may then be appropriate for the teacher or a member of the administrative team to inform the parents of the student(s) concerned, and explain to the student(s) and their parents the seriousness of the matter, with reference to the school's Policy.
4. It may also be appropriate for the school to effect further disciplinary action; any action that parents may choose to take is separate from the action taken by the school.

The disciplinary consequences in a case of malpractice may include any of the following, depending on the seriousness of the case:

1. The student will automatically receive a zero mark on the assignment, test or exam, and no 'make-up' assignment, test or exam will be offered to compensate for the zero mark.
2. The student will be removed from the course in which they showed dishonesty with a grade

F (“Failed”).

3. The infraction will be recorded in the disciplinary file of the student(s) concerned.
4. Reference to the infraction will be made in the end-of-term report(s) of the student(s) guilty of it.
5. If the student is a prefect or holds any other office, they will lose that status: we must be able to trust our prefects to act with integrity and honesty.
6. In case of a repeat offence, the student will be dropped from extra-curricular activities in which they are taking part, including a sports team: we must be able to trust the members of a team that may represent the school.
7. In case of a second repetition, the student will face suspension from the school.

## V. Academic Dishonesty in the IB

Because of the special role of the IB as an international qualifying exam for students’ further education, and also because of the values that the IBO expects students to have, which are expressed in the Learner Profile, any case of malpractice by an IB student must be taken extremely seriously, especially of course in any internally or externally assessed work by a student and in the final exams. The IBO therefore has a document describing in great detail the school’s and the IBO’s response to any actual or suspected case of malpractice. This is a public document available on the website of the IBO.

What follows are some of the points from that document and how they are relevant to teachers and the administration at the school.

1. For each work submitted for internal or external assessment by the IB, the student has to sign a statement to the effect that the work is in its final form and that it is their own, apart from appropriately acknowledged parts; and the teacher has to authenticate, to the best of his or her ability, the work as the student’s own. If any form of malpractice is discovered, at the school or by the examiner, after the student has signed that statement, he or she will not be awarded a grade in that subject.

If a student was not awarded a grade because of having been found guilty of malpractice, they are still free to retake the subject, 6 or 12 months later, and gain a mark.

2. The school has an important role to play in ensuring that there has been no malpractice, and any work that cannot be fully authenticated must not be submitted to the IBO: any problems must be sorted out at the school.

To ensure that it is the student’s own, the school requires all work that will be submitted for internal or external assessment to be passed through the TurnItIn website. Before allowing a student to sign the statement that the work is their own, teachers must check the “originality score” of the work on the website; but they must also use their judgement – a piece of work may be original, but not have been written by the student himself or herself.

If there is a problem, the teacher can give the student the opportunity to re-upload the work,

or hand in another version, and check again if it is acceptable. In any case, if there is no acceptable version two days before the work has to be dispatched to the IB, the teacher has to inform a member of the administrative team in writing. The student's parents will then be informed that the work cannot be submitted and that this will result in the student not being awarded a grade in that subject.

Teachers are strongly advised to discuss any problems they may have with the IB DP Coordinator or the Principal, and to obtain their backing for any action they take.

3. Similarly, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that there is no malpractice when students take exams. Again, the IBO has very detailed requirements which must be strictly adhered to in the administration of the final exams. Before they act as invigilators, teachers will be given information on their responsibilities, and it is essential that they take their role very seriously.

Note: Any quoted text in this document is taken from the IBO's "Diploma Programme: Academic Honesty".