

Swans International Sierra Blanca Policy on Academic Honesty

Introduction

At Swans International, we aim to encourage and celebrate student achievement of all types. A key part of any feeling of achievement is the satisfaction that a successful outcome has been attained through honest effort and hard work, without resort to any form of inappropriate or dishonest conduct. Central to Swans' ethos and mission statement are the principles of honesty, trust and respect for others.

In order to promote these core values, and at the same time adhere to the requirements of certain external bodies, such as the International Baccalaureate Organisation ("IBO"), Swans International has developed and implemented this policy addressing Academic Honesty, in which the main objectives are:

- to set out the School's expectations in relation to academic honesty and appropriate conduct;
- to explain what the School and other relevant organizations consider to be academic dishonesty and dishonest conduct (sometimes referred to as "malpractice");
- to provide examples of good practice to help students avoid inadvertent dishonest conduct;
- to explain the consequence for students who are found to have been engaging in malpractice; and
- to highlight certain procedural issues relating specifically to the IB Diploma Programme ('DP') with which all DP students are required to comply.

It is very important, when completing assignment, tests, examinations, homework, class work or other tasks, that students adhere to the principles of *authenticity*, respect for *intellectual property* and *honest practice*. Authenticity relates to ensuring that any piece of work completed or submitted by a student is based upon that student's own, original ideas and effort. If a student uses the ideas or work of another person (sometimes referred to as that person's "intellectual property"), those ideas or work must be fully acknowledged, so that there is no suspicion of a student trying to "pass off" another person's intellectual property as their own. Honest practice means not engaging in any behaviour that results, or could result in any student gaining an unfair advantage over others.

Examples of Malpractice

Although the definition of malpractice may be fairly broad, most people have a reasonable sense of what type of conduct might be considered dishonest in the context of academic work. The descriptions below may help to highlight certain common areas of malpractice, but if students or parents are in any doubt, they should consult with the relevant subject teacher, form tutor or member of the School's Senior Management Team for clarification.

Common examples of academic dishonesty include the following:

- **Plagiarism:** this involves using someone else's ideas or work *without giving that person appropriate recognition or credit*. Using someone else's work may include a student copying, quoting, summarising or otherwise using or presenting ideas, phrases, results of experiments, calculations, data or other similar information that the student did not arrive at or develop on their own. Sources of such information may include published works (such as books, films, websites, magazines or newspaper) or unpublished work (such as another student's work or any unpublished material produced by someone else).

In other words, representing another person's work as one's own is academically dishonest. Students can avoid this by indicating clearly in any work submitted the source of any major or unique idea that they did not arrive at on their own.

- **Unauthorised Collaboration:** this involves a student working with or receiving help from others (including other students, parents or other individuals) on an assessed piece of work (which may include class- or home work, tests or examinations) without the consent or knowledge of the relevant teacher.
- **Collusion:** this involves supporting malpractice by others and may include, for example, one student allowing another student to copy their work and submit it as their own.
- **Multiple Submission:** this involves presenting the same piece of work to meet the different components of more than one academic assessment. For example, a student may submit a piece of work to satisfy the requirements of one particular examination or assessment component and then use the same or a similar piece of work to satisfy the requirements of a second examination or assessment component.
- **Fabrication and Falsification:** these practices may include: inventing information or data to be used in academic submissions; using inappropriate or improper methods to collect data and presenting them as legitimate; and falsifying records (such as examination scores or records of work or achievement).

- **Cheating:** this may involve a wide array of different practices but a common feature of most forms of cheating is the attempt to gain an unfair advantage over other students. Examples frequently relate to tests and examinations and may include a student: taking unauthorised material (such as notes, study guides and mobile telephones) into an examination; looking at or copying other students' work or disrupting other students during an examination; obtaining an examination paper or details of an examination question in advance; impersonating another candidate in an examination; and otherwise breaching specific rules laid down by an examination board or authority. In general, the question of whether a student did, in fact, gain an unfair advantage from the particular act of cheating is irrelevant; it is the act itself that constitutes malpractice.

Avoiding Malpractice – Guidelines for Students

Incidents of malpractice and academic dishonesty at Swans have been thankfully very rare. However, there is considerable scope for students to engage in such practice inadvertently or without malicious intent.

It is unfortunately not an acceptable defense against charges of malpractice that a student was unaware that they were engaging in dishonest conduct or that they did not gain any benefit from such conduct. Individual teachers will provide specific recommendations to students relating to academic honesty in their particular subjects; however, set out in Appendix 1 are general guidelines for all students for avoiding possible instances of malpractice.

It should be noted that teachers have a number of different measures to detect instances of dishonest conduct, especially in relation to plagiarism, one of the more common forms of malpractice. There are, for example, a number of internet sites which can be used to check written text to determine the degree of authenticity and the School may, from time to time, make use of such services.

Consequences

Set out below are the sanctions which will be applied by the School to students found to have been engaging in academic malpractice. However, it should also be noted that where malpractice relates to assignments or tasks forming part of the assessment relating to various external bodies, such as the IBO or other examination boards, further sanction relating, *inter alia*, to the awarding of marks or disqualification from examination sessions may also apply.

- In general, all students found to have engaged in academic malpractice will receive a formal Academic Warning. This will be recorded on their School file, with a copy of the Academic Warning letter sent to parents. Where the malpractice relates to a specific assignment, test or examination, the student will receive a zero score on that particular piece of work. This general sanction may apply, whether or not a specific intent to deceive can be proven. In line with the

School's Sanctions Policy, the Academic Warning will result in an after-school Head Teacher's detention which will be held at the next available opportunity.

- For more serious instances of academic malpractice or where a second or subsequent instance(s) of malpractice has occurred, students will receive a formal Academic Warning combined with suspension from attendance at School for up to one week (at the discretion of the Head Teacher). Once again, where the malpractice relates to a specific assignment, test or examination, the student will receive a zero score on that particular piece of work. Examples of more serious academic malpractice may include situations where there is a clear intent to deceive, such as instances of copying in tests or examinations (including students who permit others to copy from them).
- Where a student has engaged in persistent or grave academic malpractice with clear dishonest intent, the School reserves the right to permanently exclude that student from further attendance at the School. It should be noted that where a student is permanently excluded, the School reserves the right not to refund any deposit or similar payment which might otherwise be re-payable when a student leaves the school. Instances of grave academic malpractice will be judged by the Head teacher in conjunction with the school's Senior Management Team on a case-by-case basis, but may include: stealing of examination papers or other materials, deliberate falsification of information or results, and deliberate and malicious attempts to distract or interfere with the performance of another student during a test or examination.

Specific Provisions relating to the IB Diploma Programme ("DP")

In addition to the general provisions set out above, a number of specific provisions apply to students engaged upon the DP, as follows:

- at the start of the programme, all DP students will be provided with a copy of this policy and the appendices and will be required to sign a declaration (substantially in the form of Appendix 3) confirming, inter alia, that all work submitted for assessment will be their own authentic work;
- as part of the IB regulations, DP students are also required to sign a candidate declaration on the coversheet of all work submitted for assessment and moderation;
- DP students are made aware that the IBO randomly checks candidates' work for plagiarism using a web-based plagiarism prevention system; and
- DP students should note the following extract from the IB's General Regulations: Diploma Programme, relating to malpractice:

E: Malpractice

Article 29: Definition of malpractice

The IB Organization defines malpractice as behaviour that results in, or may result in, the candidate or any other candidate gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment components. Malpractice includes the following.

- a. Plagiarism: this is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the candidate's own.
- b. 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.
- c. Duplication of work: this is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or IB diploma requirements.
- d. 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, disclosure of information to and receipt of information from candidates about the content of an examination paper within 24 hours after a written examination).

Article 30: Applicable procedure

- 30.1 The school's Diploma Programme coordinator must inform the IB Organization if he or she identifies any malpractice (for example, plagiarism) in relation to a candidate's work after the candidate has signed the cover sheet to the effect that it is his or her own work and constitutes the final version of that work. In such cases, or when an examiner or the IB Organization suspects malpractice, the school will be required to conduct an investigation and provide the IB Organization with relevant documentation concerning the case. If questions arise about the authenticity of a candidate's work before the cover sheet has been signed, that is, before the work has reached its final stage, the situation must be resolved within the school.
- 30.2 Candidates suspected of malpractice will be invited, through the coordinator, to present a written explanation or defence.
- 30.3 Cases of suspected malpractice will be presented to the final award committee. After reviewing all evidence collected during the investigation, the committee will decide whether to dismiss the allegation, uphold it, or ask for further investigations to be made.
- 30.4 If the final award committee deems evidence of malpractice insufficient, the allegation will be dismissed and a grade will be awarded in the normal way.
- 30.5 If the final award committee decides that a case of malpractice has been established, no grade will be awarded in the subject(s) concerned. No IB diploma will be awarded to the candidate, but a certificate will be awarded for other subject(s) in which no malpractice has occurred. The candidate will be permitted to register for future examinations at least one year after the session in which malpractice was established.
- 30.6 If a case of malpractice is very serious, the final award committee is entitled to decide that the candidate will not be permitted to register for any future examination session.
- 30.7 If the candidate has already been found guilty of malpractice in a previous session this will normally lead to disqualification from participation in any future examination session.
- 30.8 An IB diploma, or a certificate, may be withdrawn from a candidate at any time if malpractice is subsequently established.

Appendix 1:

Avoiding Malpractice – Guidelines for Students

Set out below are some general guidelines designed to allow students to avoid academic malpractice:

- *Always acknowledge the ideas of others*

Whenever submitting or presenting work which uses the ideas, thoughts or work of other people, you must always acknowledge these sources in the work that you submit or the presentation that you make. This may seem obvious when quoting ideas from books, newspapers, magazines and other written media; however, you must also take care when using the internet. Just because information from the internet appears to be in the public domain and freely-available to everyone, it does not mean that it can be used without attribution. Such information may also represent the “intellectual property” of others and therefore requires attribution.

There are a number of ways to acknowledge your sources and this may vary according to different subjects; specific guidance will therefore be provided by your individual subject teachers. However, the general conventions for attribution at Swans are set out in Appendix 2.

- *Take care when asking others for help with written tasks*

You must always inform your teacher if you have received help (whether from parents, other students or anyone else) in completing any assignment, whether in class or for homework. However, unless a teacher has stated otherwise, you must not collaborate (work together) with anyone else on any test, examination or other piece of work which constitutes part of a formal assessment. If you are considering working together with another student on a piece of work, you should always check with your teacher in advance to see whether this is permitted.

- *Never copy from another student or allow your work to be copied*

You must never copy from someone else or allow your work to be copied by another student. If your teacher has allowed you to work together with (an) other student(s) on a task (such as an experiment or investigation) which involves an individual write-up (as distinct from a joint or collective piece of work) then your write-up should be your own independent work and not simply a direct or indirect copy of what your partner(s) have written. You should ensure that all assignments that are submitted represent your own work and ideas (unless specifically acknowledged as the work or ideas of others).

- *Never be tempted to cheat*

Most of us have a pretty good idea when something is dishonest and, as a general rule of thumb, if you think something may be dishonest, then it probably is. If in any doubt at all, then always ask a teacher.

But you must, in particular, be familiar with all the rules and regulations that relate to external examinations, including GCSE and IB assessments taken at the School. At the start of all examination sessions, these will be explained to you by the teacher responsible for examinations and a copy of the regulations are normally posted both outside and inside each examination room.

There may be occasions when you do something in the exam room without any intention of cheating; for example, picking up a piece of paper which has fallen from your neighbour's desk and returning it to them, inadvertently bringing a mobile 'phone (switched off) into the exam room or whispering to someone who has asked you the time. Each of these things may have serious consequences, including disqualification for suspected cheating – it is no excuse to say that you did not gain or benefit from such actions or that you had no intention of cheating.

Appendix 2:

Acknowledging the Work and Ideas of Others - General Guidelines for Students

Whenever you copy (i.e. quote) or paraphrase (i.e. summarise) the work or ideas of someone else in your work, you must acknowledge that the ideas or work are not your own and attribute the information to the original author, showing the source from which the information was obtained. This includes not just written words, but also diagrams, photographs, illustrations, maps, data – indeed any information that is not your own original work. This process of attribution is sometimes called “citing” or “referencing”.

Your teachers will inform you of any subject-specific conventions for citing or referencing your sources, but the following are general guidelines which should be followed.

Bibliography

Your work should include a “bibliography”. A bibliography is a list of all the sources which you have used or consulted in completing your work. It is included at the end of your work.

Each entry on the list should be sufficiently clear so that someone reading your work would be able to use the information to locate the source you have used. The list should appear in alphabetical order by the name of the author. One helpful method for remembering the information you should include for each entry in your bibliography is the “ABCD” method, where:

A is for Author (i.e. the person who originally wrote the publication)

B is for Book (i.e. the title of the publication)

C is for Company (i.e. the name of the publishing company that published the source)

D is for Date (i.e. the date or year that the source was published).

It is, of course, acceptable to provide even more detail including Chapter and page numbers. So, for example:

Dickens, Charles – Great Expectations, Penguin Classics, Paperback 2002, Ch. 3, p.17

Referencing

If you refer to an idea or quote directly from the source in the body of your work, then you need to include a reference so that the person reading your work can then cross-refer to the bibliography to see where the quote or idea originated. The recommended conventions for referencing are either:

- (a) to include the reference to the author in the text, together with the date (year) of the publication. For example:

Smith (2003) states that: "The best policy is honesty..."; or

- (b) to use numbered footnotes in the body of your work, stating where a particular quote or idea originated. Many word processing applications (including Microsoft Word) have tools for including footnotes.

If you are in any doubt about the procedures for acknowledging the work of others, please ask your subject teacher or the school librarian, who will be pleased to provide further advice and guidance.

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