ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Introduction

St Columba's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministries College in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Venerable Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

Policy

The College Mission Statement is underpinned by the values of commitment to justice, educational endeavour and love of learning. Therefore, we aspire to the pursuit of academic excellence by developing students who are independent and critical thinkers. In order to achieve this, students (should) be able to produce authentic work/products in a variety of contexts. Central to authenticity is the notion of Academic Honesty.

We recognise and encourage the need to be involved in living out justice in the College, the local and the international community. We aim to provide a model of learning that:

- recognises the dignity of the individual and respects and celebrates that individuality
- fosters self-worth and self-discipline in a supportive environment
- nurtures the development of positive relationships through the provision of just structures and processes.

These aspirations are central to academic excellence at St Columba's College. This policy sets out the internal procedures that apply to all assessments within the College for addressing academic honesty, to ensure that these are dealt with fairly, consistently, transparently and promptly. This policy demonstrates the College's commitment to practices that reflect the values of justice and hope.

Guiding Principles

St Columba's College wishes to foster a culture where academic honesty is understood and acknowledged. The underlying principles are:

- the process of learning is complex and involves investigating, analysing, synthesising and reflecting
- encouraging and fostering high standards of academic rigour enables students to become creative and critical thinkers
- students have a responsibility to demonstrate that the work they present is their own
- students have a responsibility to acknowledge all resources used
- plagiarism and/or cheating are unacceptable.

All teachers have a role in developing students' skills in acknowledging source material and pride in their own work.

In considering if a student's work is their own, teachers will consider if the work:

- is atypical of other work produced by the student
- is inconsistent with the teacher's knowledge of the student's ability
- contains unacknowledged material
- has not been sighted and monitored by the teacher during its development.

Citations

St Columba's College will be using the Harvard Referencing Style unless otherwise specified by VCAA Study Design.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Review the Academic Honesty Policy with students on an annual basis
- Implement teaching strategies that explicitly teach the research process
- Provide clear, unambiguous and educationally appropriate information about the form of referencing
- Ensure that students cannot use material from previous years, by altering assessment tasks from term to term, semester to semester, year to year
- When students undertake research make it a requirement that they access a minimum of three (3) different sources
- Ensure that students follow the College Bibliography Guidelines (online)
- Encourage students to use a data chart to show evidence of personal research eg notetaking, highlighting, drafting and conferencing)
- Where appropriate, rubric to include criteria that acknowledge notetaking, synthesis of information and bibliography
- Collect all assessments before returning student work
- Assessment instructions should clearly indicate accepted materials and conditions.

Student Responsibilities

- A student must ensure that all unacknowledged work submitted for assessment is genuinely their own
- A student must accurately cite the work of others in their own assignments
- A student must acknowledge all resources used, including:
  - texts, websites and other source material
  - the name and status of any person who provided assistance and the type of assistance provided
- A student must not receive undue assistance from another person in the preparation and submission of work
- A student must not submit the same piece of work for assessment in more than one study, or more than once within a study
- A student must not knowingly assist another student in a breach of rules
- A student should acknowledge tutors and regular help from a family member
- A student must not possess, refer to or have access to any material or device containing information directly or indirectly related to the subject matter under assessment/examination. This includes notes and electronic devices such as smart watches
- A student must not circulate or publish written work that is being submitted for assessment in a study in the academic year of enrolment.

- Acceptable levels of assistance include:
  - the incorporation of ideas or material derived from other sources (for example, by reading, viewing or notetaking), but which have been transformed by the student and used in a new context
  - prompting and general advice from another person or source, which leads to refinements and/or self-correction.
- Unacceptable forms of assistance include:
  - use of, or copying, another person's work or other resources without acknowledgement
  - corrections or improvements made or dictated by another person.

Definitions

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is the process of acknowledging all sources of information to avoid plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas, imagery, writings, or tangible expressions of other people, and passing these off as your own.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are defined as smart watches, mobile phones, tablets and non-approved calculators.

Honesty

Honesty is a value that holds each person, to tell the truth, and to defend the truth. Honesty supports intellectual growth and creates a fair learning environment.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an act of fraud. It includes:
- using the words/ideas of another without including proper citation and bibliography (including AI)
- copying and pasting from someone's work (even one sentence) is considered plagiarism unless there are quotation marks preceding and following the quoted material
- citing the sources used but copying and pasting entire sentences (or photos/graphics/code) without using quotation marks or proper citation methods
- presenting the ideas of another as one's own original thoughts
- copying another student's work or assignment (including homework and sharing of drafts) to submit as one's own
- allowing another student to copy your assignment (including homework)
- intentionally giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words (paraphrasing) but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.

Collusion

Collusion is when a student uses the ideas or actual work of another student with their consent and presents it as their own. In such cases, both students are in breach of the Academic Honesty Policy.

Examples may include:
- student presents/submits task as their own work, yet there is evidence of unauthorised collaboration with another student

- allowing another student to copy their work
- where two or more students submit identical work.

Legitimate Collaboration

Legitimate collaboration is working with other students to share ideas and synthesize existing and new knowledge to improve educational outcomes. In this case, each student provides her own contribution and if any content has been taken from another source then the source is fully acknowledged.

Cheating

Cheating is the intended use of unauthorised assistance to complete an assessment.
'Cheating' in an educational environment includes the following examples:
- submitting another student's work as one's own, for example, an essay written by a sibling or another student
- submitting a paper or artwork, etc purchased/accessed from an Internet essay site
- having and/or using an unauthorised set of notes, summary sheet, unauthorised calculator or other electronic devices during a test or quiz
- helping another student without permission during a test or quiz
- stealing or borrowing or removing an exam from the classroom or taking it from a teacher without explicit permission
- modifying or in any way altering a teacher's grades or official records
- using a teacher's notes, manuals, or guides without explicit permission
- using AI technologies to generate part or all of an assessment task (unless specifically required in the assessment documentation).

Dishonest Acts

Dishonest Acts are any act which would reasonably be considered to be dishonest. In an educational environment this includes the following examples:
- any action to delay or confound the process of determining a breach of the policy
- any action to incorrectly implicate another student
- any action that deliberately deceives in order to gain an advantage in assessments over another student.

Sources

A source is a place, person or thing from which something is obtained or originated (Penguin, 2001).

Sources can include:
- Media (Film, Websites, Social Media - Blogs...)
- Text (Books, Newspapers, Websites, Letters)
- Audio (Recordings, Podcasts…)
- Ideas
- Images (Photos, Artwork…)
- Performances (Music, Dramatisations, Interviews, Speeches)

References

- Allen, E, 2001.The Penguin English Dictionary 'Sources' Penguin Books, England. Marotus, G. 2012. Policy on Intellectual Theft / Plagiarism (online)
- ISWA Whole School Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures 2018
- St.Columba's College, 2024. VCE Student Guide: UNITS 1 – 4 St Columba's College Essendon, Victoria p.4
- University of Melbourne, 2024. 'Academic Honesty and Plagiarism' (online).

Related Policies and Procedures

AI Policy
VCE VET Student Guide
VCE VET Teacher Guide
College Planner Pages on SEQTA

ACADEMIC HONESTY FLOWCHART

The guidelines are to be used when there is a concern that a student has breached the Academic Honesty Policy.

Year 7 to 10 Breach of Rules Process

Breach of Academic Honesty Policy is suspected. The Subject Teacher will immediately have a conversation about authenticity. Authenticity is to be validated with evidence already submitted (eg. note taking & bibliography or drafts).

Student provides evidence to show that work is authentic.
No further action is required.

Evidence suggests Academic Honesty Policy has been breached and the concern needs further investigation.

Using restorative practices the Subject Teacher (ST) to meet with the student to discuss the issue/concern/allegation to ascertain the reason why this incident occured. Student is given the opportunity to explain and respond to the allegation.

Student cannot provide evidence to show that work is authentic.

Using restorative practices the Subject Teacher (ST) to meet with the student to discuss possible actions/consequences (inconsultation with the Learning Area Leader) which may include; Resubmission of work; a warning; or reschedule activity.

Subject Teacher (ST) to add the incident on SEQTA Level 2 Breach of Academic Honesty Policy (Plagiarism) Years 7-10. Include the following details in the incident:
iii. Nature of the allegation
iii. Action taken to resolve this incident. (Mark as Unresolved if further action to be taken)
iii. Add Learning Area Leader, House Leader, House Teacher & HoLT.

Inform parent/guardian of concerns via email.
Include a copy of the email in SEQTA as a follow-up note.

VCE/VET Breach of Rules Process

Breach of rules is suspected. Student continues to complete the assessment and the Subject Teacher approaches the student immediately after the completed assessment.

Collect evidence from the students and state the matter will be referred to the VCE Leader or Applied Learning Leader to have a conversation about authenticity. Authenticity is to be validated with evidence already submitted (eg. note taking & bibliography or drafts).

Referral to VCE Leader or Applied Learning Leader. Subject Teacher (ST) to add the incident on SEQTA Level 2 Breach of Academic Honesty Policy (Plagiarism) VCE/VET. Include the following details in the incident:
i. Nature of the allegation
ii. Action taken to resolve this incident. (Mark as Unresolved if further action to be taken)
iii. Add Learning Area Leader, House Leader, House Teacher & HoLT.

VCE Leader or Applied Learning Leader to interview the teacher and review the student work, assessment process, past student work comparison and copies of the breach materials.

Using restorative practices the VCE Leader or Applied Learning Leader make contact with student and discuss allegation and process. VCE Leader or Applied Learning Leader make contact with parent/legal guardian. Email to parent/legal guardian and student with at least 24 hours notice.

The student can elect to have one support person in the meeting.
The LAL will document/record the minutes of the meeting.

Documentation, context and evidence to HoLT and Principal.
HoLT and/or Principal make final decision.

Inform student of decision and of VCAA requirements.
Discuss the actions moving forward and identify the appeals process.

Determination letter sent to parent/legal guardian.
Teacher informed of penalty.

Examples:
Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Case Example	Possible Outcome
Student A copied 3 questions, word for word from Student B. Student B was unaware.	All three questions that were copied received zero. The rest of the test was marked as normal.
Student handed in an assessment that was determined to be 17% plagarised through an online plagiarism program (Turnitin).	15 -25 % reduction on the plagiarised work
Student A copied Student B paragraph, response or submission, both parties aware	0 for the section that was plagiarised for both students, both students
Collaborating during development stage, then submitting an identical response when it should be an independent response, rather than a joint response	0 for the section that was plagiarised for both students, both students
Use of AI to generate a response that is submitted as their own work. Determined by Turnitin or other AI analyser	Work generated and confirmed as AI, marked as a 0. Rest of assessment can be assessed
Student does not cite the work or a reference list is missing	Official Warning. Students are asked to resubmit.
Students use AI as directed in the assessment outline	No penalty
Student has a large similarity (greater than 50%) percentage in the TurnItIn function on SEQTA	Official Warning. Students are asked to resubmit.
Student fabricate a source or citation to support	Section not considered in assessing
Submitted the same assessment for two different subjects	Submission will not be accepted and resubmission to occur
Purchasing or obtaining work from external source (e.g. ghostwriter, tutor)	Official Warning