Academic Misconduct Policy

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Person Responsible	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement
Approval/ review body	SLT
Frequency of Review*	24 months

*** Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require**

Review History:		
Date	Reviewed by	Reason for review
Jan 2011	Compliance & Policy Manager	Title change of Person Responsible
May 2012	Vice Principal	Update
Feb 2016	Deputy Principal	Update
Feb 2018	Deputy Principal Curriculum	Minor update
Feb 2021	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement	Minor updates
Apr 2023	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement	Minor updates

Contents

Related policies/documents:
Student Behaviour Policy; Staff Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct)

1. **Policy Statement**

Students who deliberately cheat or engage in fraudulent behaviour are characterised as threatening the values and beliefs that underpin learning, angering and discouraging other students who do not use such tactics, devaluing the integrity of awards and qualifications and distorting the efforts of teachers who wish to teach rather than police other's work.

North Kent College ("the College") which includes Hadlow College, recognises that there may be rare instances when staff engage in malpractice related to assessment, which will be dealt with through the staff Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct). Throughout this document, the word 'teachers' refers to teachers, tutors, lecturers, assessors and instructors.

2. **Purposes and Objectives**

In establishing this policy, the College is seeking to:

2.1   maintain the integrity of its academic awards and procedures;

2.2   define academic misconduct;

2.3   explore the reasons for academic misconduct;

2.4   provide guidance on its prevention and detection;

2.5   outline the procedures for dealing with incidents; and

2.6   give students affected a fair opportunity to respond to any allegation of academic misconduct.

3. **Coverage and Scope**

The policy is for use alongside public examinations, where the examining boards' own procedures will apply. It includes college-assessed work that contributes towards external examination marks.

4. **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

4.1   **Cheating**

Is defined as obtaining access to the work of another person or source including from Artificial Intelligence (A.I) by deceitful means for use in examination and assessment, whether or not it is subsequently used fraudulently.

Examples of cheating:

4.1.1 communicating with another candidate or copying from another candidate during an examination or assessment except when this is permitted, for example group assessments;

4.1.2 communicating during an assessment or examination with anyone other than an authorised member of staff or invigilator by oral, written or electronic means;

4.1.3 introducing written or printed materials or electronic information into an examination or assessment unless permitted by the regulations;

4.1.4 gaining access to unauthorised material relating to an assessment or examination before or during an examination; and/or

4.1.5 obtaining copies of 'unseen' examination or assessment papers in advance of the date of their authorised release.

4.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's work or that of Artificial Intelligence means, be they images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as the student's own, or alternatively appropriating the artwork, images or computer generated work of others without properly acknowledging the source, with or without their permission.

Examples of plagiarism:

4.2.1 the inclusion in a candidate's work of another person's work without the use of quotation marks and/or acknowledgement of sources;

4.2.2 the summarising of another person's work by simply changing words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgements;

4.2.3 copying the work of another candidate, with or without their knowledge or agreement. If copied with the agreement of the other candidate, both parties are guilty of misconduct; and/or

4.2.4 the use of ideas of another person or A.I. without acknowledgement of the source.

4.3 Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism. It may be defined as the unauthorised and unattributed collaboration of students or others in a piece of assessed work.

Examples of collusion:

4.3.1   the student submits as entirely his or her own work, work done in collaboration with, or commissioned from, another person or persons, or A.I. whether for reward or not;

4.3.2   the student knowingly collaborates with another candidate or candidates in the completion of work which is submitted as that/those other candidates'/candidate's/A.I.'s own unaided work; and/or

4.3.3   the student permits another candidate to copy all or part of their own work knowing it is to be submitted as that other candidate's own unaided work.

4.4   Falsifying data

Falsification is defined as any attempt to present fictitious or distorted data, evidence, reference, experimental results or materials contributing to a piece of assessed work and/or knowingly make use of such materials.

Example of falsification:

4.4.1   The presentation of data in reports and projects, based on work passed off as having been carried out by the candidate when it has not been, or has been obtained by unfair means.

4.5   Personation

'Personation' is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or to gain unfair advantage. It is the legal term of what is usually referred to by the lay person as 'impersonation'.

Examples of personation:

4.5.1   a person assumes the identity of a candidate with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that candidate; and/or

4.5.2   the candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage.

4.6   Deceit

Deceit is defined as seeking to achieve an advantage through, for example, the misrepresentation or non-disclosure of relevant information.

Examples of deceit:

4.6.1 re-submitting previously assessed work; and/or

4.6.2 failure to disclose that a piece of work was submitted for assessment and has been or will be used for other academic purposes.

4.6.3 Taking credit for work that is not created by you but has been created through the use of A.I.

4.7 Ghosting

Ghosting exists where:

4.7.1 a student submits as their own work, a piece of work that has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf or from A.I. means e.g. the use of 'ghost writing' service or similar; and/or

4.7.2 A student will also be guilty of academic misconduct if they deliberately make available or seeks to make available material to another student (of this College or elsewhere) whether in exchange for financial gain or otherwise with the intention that the material is used by the other student to commit academic misconduct.

5. Reasons

5.1 Academic misconduct may occur intentionally because:

5.1.1 the student has allowed too little time to do adequate work- due to paid work or poor personal time management;

5.1.2 not enough time has been given to do work properly by the teacher;

5.1.3 the student is not willing or able to generate their own ideas;

5.1.4 the student lacks confidence in their own ideas; and/or

5.1.5 not enough support has been given to the student.

5.1.6 The ease of use with new A.I bots that have been introduced.

5.2 Academic misconduct may occur unintentionally because:

5.2.1 the student has not been made aware of the regulations;

5.2.2 the task and/or method of assessment has not been understood;

5.2.3 the student lacks the necessary skills to extract information and represent it in their own words;

5.2.4 the student is not aware of the necessity of acknowledging sources of images, quotes and information; and/or

5.2.5 student receives extensive support from support teachers in report writing.

6. Prevention and Detection

6.1 Much can be done to prevent academic misconduct. During induction and in preparation for an assignment or assessment students should have:

6.1.1 clear guidelines on what constitutes academic misconduct including examples;

6.1.2 information on copyright infringement;

6.1.3 advice on how to acknowledge sources;

6.1.4 a signed Learning Agreement that all work submitted should be the learner's own; and

6.1.5 guidelines on the extent to which students can collaborate on course work.

6.2 Teachers also have the responsibility to ensure that:

6.2.1 students are taught note taking and rewriting skills;

6.2.2 work is monitored at the draft stage;

6.2.3 some work is completed under controlled conditions;

6.2.4 assignment briefs are changed from year to year as appropriate;

6.2.5 assignment briefs are shared with learning support staff who in turn inform the teacher when extensive help has been given;

6.2.6 access to work completed by students in previous years is limited; and

6.2.7 students are clear that models/examples are used for guidance purposes only.

6.3 Teachers may suspect plagiarism where:

6.3.1 the student's work is markedly different from their normal style;

6.3.2 two or more students' work is very similar and have been submitted as individual work;

6.3.3 the writing lacks coherence and passages are included with no clear context; and/or

6.3.4 unacknowledged quotes from known sources appear.

6.4 Evidence for proving academic misconduct can be collected by comparing the suspect piece of work with:

6.4.1 work previously presented by the student;

6.4.2 a piece on a similar subject undertaken under controlled conditions;

6.4.3 other students' writings where similarities occur;

6.4.4 the sources the student seems to have plagiarised; and

6.4.5 the student's performance when assessed orally.

6.5 Software programmes may be used to assess the level of plagiarism shown by a piece of work. Typing extracts into a search engine can also bring up related texts.

7. Procedures

7.1 Once academic misconduct has been suspected, this should be discussed with the student to find out what has happened. The most productive approach is to ask how the work was completed to establish if the situation was unintentional. If this is the first time that the situation has arisen and the indications are that the misconduct was unintentional, then the assignment should be referred and the student asked to resubmit. A teacher may also consider:

7.1.1 a written warning to the student (copied to their parent if they are under eighteen years of age);

7.1.2 deducting marks;

7.1.3 reduction of assessment grade;

7.1.4 award of a minimum pass mark; and/or

7.1.5 withdrawal of the right to resubmit or resit.

7.2 For intentional misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the situation, the content and the demands of the particular syllabus, the penalties outlined in the relevant Examination Board Guidelines for externally assessed work should be applied. For internally assessed work, the College Behaviour Policy should be applied as fraud is listed as 'serious misconduct'. In this latter

instance, academic misconduct will result in:

7.2.1 final written warning with further breaches resulting in suspension or dismissal;

7.2.2 award of a zero grade or withholding a grade; and/or

7.2.3 withdrawal of the right to re-sit an exam or assessment or re-submit work.

7.3 In the most serious situations, the misconduct may result in:

7.3.1 removal of the student from the course; and/or

7.3.2 suspension from the College pending investigation.

7.4 If a student denies academic misconduct or wishes to appeal the decisions made against them then the College Appeals Procedures as outlined in the Student Behaviour Policy will be applied.

8. Organisation and Responsibility

8.1 The Deputy Executive Principal Teaching, Learning and Improvement is responsible for the construction, monitoring and review of this policy.

8.2 In relation to academic misconduct, teachers are responsible for:

8.2.1 informing students of regulations and sanctions; and

8.2.2 prevention and identification of instances.

8.3 Heads of Curriculum are responsible for the:

8.3.1 investigation into suspect work; and

8.3.2 implementation of the Examination Board and College Disciplinary policies relating to academic misconduct including written warnings and final written warnings.

8.4 Heads of Curriculum and Assistant Principals are responsible for suspensions, exclusions and appeals procedures and for ensuring that notification is provided to the Deputy Executive Principal - Teaching Learning and Improvement on a termly basis of all instances of academic misconduct.

9. Staff Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by College staff. This list is not exhaustive.

9.1 failure to keep any awarding body mark schemes secure;

9.2   alteration of awarding body assessment and grading criteria;

9.3   assisting student/s in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves College staff producing work for the student;

9.4   producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated;

9.5   allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own, to be included in a student's assignment/task/portfolio/ coursework;

9.6   facilitating and allowing impersonation;

9.7   misusing the conditions for special student requirements,

9.8   failing to keep student computer files secure;

9.9   falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud; and

9.10   fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the student completing all the requirements of assessment.

Where staff malpractice is suspected, an investigation will take place under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct).

10. Quality and Monitoring

The Heads of Curriculum will report any occurrences of misconduct to their senior line manager who will need to report to the Deputy Executive Principal - Teaching Learning and Improvement. This to include the numbers of instances of academic misconduct discovered, the outcomes of investigations and the disciplinary procedures implemented.

It will also include recommendations for updates in the policies and procedures in light of activity in this area.