

# Academic Integrity Policy at the Gymnasium Bäumlhof

## 1. Rationale/statement of purpose for the policy

At the Gymnasium Bäumlhof we strive to enable and encourage students to take on responsibility for their own work and their own behaviour. We believe that - especially in this age of digital innovation - being academically honest is complex and contains many potential pitfalls for students.

In the document *Academic honesty in the IB educational context (2014)* it is stated that

“ [...] students experience a set of emotional pressures—the pressure to perform on summative assessments, the stress of the university admission process and time pressures—exerted by a system that can be seen to reward the individual’s end result over the work (individual or collective) required to get there (p.16).”

In order for students at the Gymnasium Bäumlhof to cope better with these pressures, we have created this policy and hope it will be both informative and supportive for students, teachers and parents alike.

## 2. Forms of academic dishonesty

We believe being academically dishonest occurs when students “attempt to present others’ academic work as their own” (Jensen et al, 2002). This can appear in the following forms<sup>1</sup>:

- **Cheating:** to break a rule or law usually to gain an advantage at something. In the academic context, cheating is especially related to testing, where it can include copying other students’ answers, illegally obtaining a copy of the exam prior to the exam date or using written notes during the exam
- **Fabrication:** to create or make up (something) in order to trick people. This can include falsifying data for experiments or other studies, creating interviews which have not been held or listing real sources (e.g. in a thesis paper) which were not used while researching.
- **Collusion:** secret cooperation for an illegal or dishonest purpose; in contrast to collaboration, where students work jointly together authorised by the educator, collusion is working together when it is not permitted or authorized by the educator. This can include working with others on assignments when group work has not been allowed, working together with other students during an individual written or oral exam or dividing group assignments unequally.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty:** Helping other students to act in an academically dishonest way. This could mean helping someone to cheat on an exam or doing their work which is to be submitted.
- **Plagiarism:** the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person. Plagiarism includes copying another’s work word for word,

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<sup>1</sup> Certain definitions according to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)) and the De Pauw University policy on Academic Dishonesty.

rewriting someone else's work with only minor changes and to summarising work without acknowledging the source.

- **Multiple submission:** The submission of work which has previously been submitted, either by the student him-/herself or by another student.
- **Deception and misrepresentation:** an act or statement intended to make people believe something that is not true; to describe (someone or something) in a false way especially in order to deceive someone. This can include lying about your work or other details, forging signatures, taking credit for group work where the student's participation was not significant, especially compared to the other group member's, reading condensed or translated material rather than the assigned text or giving a false excuse for missing an exam or a deadline.
- **Electronic Dishonesty:** The act of using network access in a way that affects a class or other students' academic work. Examples include using someone else's authorised computer account to send and receive messages, breaking into someone else's files, gaining access to restricted files, disabling others' access to network systems or files, knowingly spreading a computer virus or hacking into the school's computer system.
- **Sabotage:** the act of destroying or damaging something deliberately so that it does not work correctly; in the context of education this can mean destroying someone else's work either in order to gain an advantage or for another person to gain a disadvantage.

### 3. Responsibilities of students, teachers and the school

We believe that both teaching and learning should be used to develop positive behaviour in order for students to understand that they must demonstrate clearly that they complete their work honestly and authentically.

Students should be able to differentiate between using material to complement their work and plagiarising. They should also be aware that being academically dishonesty can appear in various different forms, i.e. writing a research paper, writing an exam, holding an oral presentation and working as a group. Furthermore, they must be aware of the consequences they face should they use sources incorrectly.

Teachers should provide opportunities where students learn to use sources correctly in order to support their own work. Furthermore, students should be given opportunities to practice research and using sources correctly whilst being given feedback on their work. Teachers should also make the students aware of the consequences of misconduct.

The school should create structures where a comfortable environment benefits students in their learning, supports teachers in their instruction and sensitises parents to the issues of academic honesty.

An attempt must be made by the whole school to be sensitise to the pressures that summative assessment and the consequent results can produce both towards students and teachers.

For information the school's teaching system see *Special Educational Needs Policy Gymnasium Bäumlihof*, for information on assessment of student's work in the IB DP see *Assessment Policy Gymnasium Bäumlihof*.

#### **4. Procedures of instructing students on academic honesty**

For students to be able to work with resources responsibly we want each student to receive instruction in the following areas:

1. What academic dishonesty consists of and why it should be avoided
2. How academic dishonesty can be avoided
3. How to research sensibly and appropriately, both online and elsewhere
4. Why citing is important and how to cite correctly
5. What the consequences of malpractice are

The school has developed a system where the students learn what academic integrity means and how it is achieved. In grade 12, the students visit a workshop given by the librarian on academic integrity. In the same year, two subject teachers guide the students in writing their first academic papers. In grade 13, at the beginning of the DP course, the DP Coordinator instructs the students on points 1., 2. and 5. according to both the expectations of the IB and of the school, and subject teachers discuss points 1-5 in class with regards to the Internal Assessments that are to be written. Furthermore, whilst writing their Extended Essays students receive continual guidance from their supervisors regarding points 3. and 4. There is also a workshop for students three months into this process which focuses especially on plagiarism and citing correctly (point 5).

#### **5. Consequences of malpractice**

We take a very strict stance on students not following the correct procedures and believe any incidence of students consciously enhancing their own work in an academically dishonest way should be sanctioned heavily. These sanctions can take on the following forms depending on the incident, the severity of the malpractice, the number of offences and the age of the student:

- deduction of points/marks
- informing the student's parents about the malpractice
- discussing the malpractice with the school principal
- temporary or permanent expulsion from school or exclusion from writing the final exams

The students are informed about the consequences of malpractice before they start their project(s). Should tendencies of malpractice become apparent to the supervisor during the work in progress, the consequences depend on the maturity and the awareness of the malpractice; it can range between lecturing the student on academic honesty to having to choose a new topic to failing the project or in its final consequence, the final exams.

Should students work in an academically dishonest way during the Swiss state “Maturaarbeit” (an equivalent of the IB DP Extended Essay), the Maturaarbeit will not be accepted, they will not be able to take the final exams and will be required to retake the final year of school. The student is informed that the final Maturaarbeit/EE is checked against plagiarism with the *Copy-Stop* programme.

## **6. Review of policy**

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

## **7. Sources:**

Jensen, L.A. et al. (2002). It’s Wrong But Everybody Does It: Academic Dishonesty Among High School And College Students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. 27, 209-228.

De Pauw University: Types of Academic Dishonesty. URL: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/policies/integrity/types/> retrieved October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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