Policy on Academic Integrity

1. Introduction

The Policy on Academic Integrity recognizes the challenges faced by staff and students in developing responsible and respectful attitudes and behaviours regarding the use of information in teaching and learning. The Internet, in particular, presents a vast amount of information that is readily available for staff and students. It is important, therefore, that this information is validated and acknowledged appropriately.

This Policy embraces and reinforces the principles and attributes expressed as Mercy Keys with a particular focus on integrity, justice, responsibility and mutual respect.

It is expected that this Policy will be implemented in developmentally appropriate ways which may result in alternative processes and consequences for different individuals.

2. Rationale

The Policy on Academic Integrity has developed from a need to identify and clarify aspects of academic honesty and malpractice to assist staff, students and parents in developing personal integrity and responsible practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students of Mercedes College and is guided by the Mercedes College Policy on Learning (2013) the IB publication Diploma Programme - Academic Honesty (2009) and SACE Assuring Assessment Integrity Policy (2012).

Definitions

In the context of this policy:

**Academic honesty** or **academic integrity** refers to the “set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment” (IBO, 2009, p 2).

An **authentic** piece of work is one that is the student’s own work “produced without undue assistance from other people or sources” (SACE Board, 2013) or with “ideas and work of others fully acknowledged” (IBO, 2009, p2). A **Breach of Rules** occurs “when a teacher is unable to verify that work submitted in the student’s own” (SACE, 2013).

**Malpractice** is defined as behaviours that result in, or may result in, a student “gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment component” (IBO, 2009, p3). “The actual possession of unauthorized material constitutes malpractice” (IBO, 2009, p 5) rather than intent or actual use. Examples of malpractice include (but is not limited to): plagiarism: “the representation of the ideas or work of another person” (IBO, 2009, p3) as their own. This includes a translation of text from another language and breaching intellectual property rights such as “patents, registered designs, trademarks, moral rights and copyright” (IBO, 2009, p2).

**Collusion**: supporting another student inappropriately by “allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another” (IBO, 2009, p3). Collusion also includes allowing another student to take their place in an assessment (SACE, 2013).

**Duplication** of work: “the presentation of the same work for different assessment …requirements” (IBO, 2009, p 3) any other behaviour that “gains an unfair advantage” for a student or that “affects the results of another student” (p 3) such as

- using data that has been fabricated rather than developed through authentic means.
- taking unauthorized material into an examination
- distracting or disrupting the learning of another student
• using materials or resources that were prohibited for an assessment task (e.g. using a calculator when one was specifically not allowed)
• giving other students information about an upcoming assessment task
• exceeding a deadline without a valid reason

Academic infringement refers to minor cases of malpractice where students have demonstrated an attempt to undertake work with academic honesty.

Learning Coordinators include the Director of Curriculum and Learning, Area of Study (Faculty) Coordinators, IB and SACE Coordinators and Heads of Schools.

4. Policy Principles

5.1. Academic integrity will be the responsibility of all staff and students at Mercedes College
• Staff are expected to model academic integrity in their work
• All assessments completed by students must be authentic, using their own language, expression and ideas
• Students must acknowledge the authenticity of their work when submitting assessment tasks
• Students must not submit the same task for different subjects or assessment components
• Students must meet the set deadline for an assessment task unless an extension has been granted.
• Extensions cannot be granted on the date the task is due without formal notification from parents
• It is the responsibility of all teachers to confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, students have submitted authentic work.

5.2. Principles of academic integrity will be at the centre of teaching and learning at Mercedes College.
• Learning Coordinators will ensure principles of academic integrity are central to teaching and learning
• All teachers are responsible for regularly promoting and reinforcing attitudes and behaviours leading to academic authenticity. Teachers, for example, should reinforce the practices of referencing and drafting to authenticate student work
• Teachers will provide students with opportunities to develop their understanding of examination conditions
• A distinction must be made between collaboration (which is encouraged) and collusion
• Positive benefits of academic honesty will be reinforced.

5.3. Mercedes College will implement processes to monitor and support academic integrity
• This Policy must be accessible to all members of the Mercedes College community
• Students and parents must sign an acknowledgement of this Policy annually
• Resources to prevent and monitor plagiarism will be available to teachers
• Students will be provided with guidelines for maintaining academic integrity including correct referencing; appropriate conduct during examinations; and processes for seeking an extension to an assessment deadline
• Arrangements such as scheduling, seating and room location will be implemented effectively for tests and examinations
• All examination rooms will have an invigilator and an appropriate number of staff supervisors.

5.4. Mercedes College may impose serious consequences for students found to have acted against the principles of this Policy (see 6. Actions and Consequences).

6. Actions and Consequences

6.1. Any form of suspected malpractice will be investigated by a Learning Coordinator and/or designate of the Principal
• Evidence of suspected malpractice must be presented to a Learning Coordinator. In the case of plagiarism, for example, the source material that has been copied will be required
The student(s) will be invited to discuss the incident and provide an explanation of defence.  
Student may be required to present a viva voce to authenticate their work  
If suspected malpractice is considered minor (for example where a student has at least demonstrated an effort to complete work within the guidelines of academic integrity) then this will be deemed an academic infringement (see 6.1.1)  
In cases where suspected malpractice is considered to be more serious, parents/guardians will be formally informed and invited to contribute to the investigation  
All investigations will remain confidential  
The result of a malpractice investigation will be formally documented and presented to the Director of Curriculum and Learning  
Copies of the investigation outcome and consequences (see 6.1.2) will be presented to the student, parent/guardian and Head of School.

6.1.1. Consequences for academic infringement will be determined by the subject teacher in consultation with the Learning Coordinator and may include (but is not limited to)
- Zero marks, partial marks or ‘incomplete’ status may be awarded for the assessment task or specific component identified as non-authentic
- The assessment task may be required to be re-submitted
- Student may be required to undertake an assessment task in a different location
- Student may be required to undertake an alternate assessment task.

6.1.2. Consequences for malpractice will be determined by the Learning Coordinator with the approval of the Principal (or delegate) and may include (but is not limited to):
- Zero marks, partial marks or ‘incomplete’ status may be awarded for the assessment task or specific component identified as non-authentic
- The assessment task may be required to be re-submitted
- Student may be required to undertake an assessment task in a different location
- Student may be required to undertake an alternate assessment task
- Internal suspension
- External suspension
- Expulsion (requires action by the Principal).

6.2. Malpractice relating to formal assessment in the IB MYP, IB Diploma or SACE will be referred to the IB or SACE Board and may result in the student being prohibited from completing the qualification.

6.3. A student and/or parent guardian is able to appeal the decision of the Learning Coordinator.
- Appeals must be addressed to the Principal within fourteen (14) days.
- The appeal process will be completed within three months or by the conclusion of the relevant academic period (whichever comes first).

6.4. The school will support a student in undertaking restorative actions when found to have undertaken an academic infringement or malpractice.