



**BEDFORD
GIRLS'
SCHOOL**

Bedford Girls' School (Senior School) Academic Honesty Policyⁱ

Reviewed: July 2025

Next Review: July /August 2027

Reviewed by: Director of Sixth Form

'As [IB] learners we strive to be: principled – we act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences' (IBO 2013).

Statement of Rationale

BGS seeks to promote an ethos of Academic Honesty for students throughout the school. We aim to develop students who are enquiring, reflective and self-regulated learners. Increasingly, as they move through the school, girls are expected and encouraged to consult the work of others in formulating their own ideas and arguments, and to collaborate in their study. They are expected to make visible and explicit the impact of others' ideas on their own.

Academic honesty will be supported and promoted by all teaching staff and tutors, checked, and where demanded, reported, according to the procedures set out later in this policy. Aspects of this policy will be translated, shared and revisited with girls at key points in their education by teachers and tutors, and through the PSHE programme.

Students moral vocabulary is built, transgressions are appropriately dealt with and students are inspired to believe in themselves. The International Center for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as a commitment to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. High standard are set for these fundamentals alongside the value we place on students being principled, contributing to a culture of integrity within the school.

Students learn what acts compromise academic honesty. We will teach students what constitutes academic dishonesty and malpractice, defined as, 'The representation of ideas or work of another person as the candidate's own' (see IB guide *Academic honesty: guidance for schools*):

- i. Plagiarism – using ideas, words, illustrations, music, data or any other form of published information produced by someone else and passing it off as your own
- ii. Copying – another student's work with or without their knowledge and passing it off as your own
- iii. Cheating – during an examination communicating with another (other than the invigilator) either in the examination room or outside by speech, sign language, signalling, in writing, via mobile device or by any other means, bringing into the examination room or consulting any unauthorised material
- iv. Collusion – allowing another student to copy your work
- v. Falsification – fabricating or altering data
- vi. For girls working for the IBDP: the IB does not allow you to submit the same work for two different assignments.

Procedures

1. How we promote Academic Honesty

- Opportunities are provided through subject teaching for students to practise, and learn through their mistakes, citing and referencing in assignments that are not intended for external submission to examination boards.
- Examples and activities shared with girls are age and stage appropriate.
- Explicit and up-to-date instruction in what constitutes malpractice and its consequences in an examination setting is delivered ahead of external examination sessions.
- Assignment-specific discussion in class of strategies to ensure the submission of work for assessment that has been conducted and is presented in an acceptable manner. This is understood to be of particular importance for students studying in the IBDP who submit for assessment a range of assignments with specific demands and challenges.
- Students submitting 'coursework' (ie. IB assessments whether internally or externally assessed, or GCSE and A Level assignments) complete and sign a cover sheet declaration that the work they submit is their own. In the case of GCSE and A Level this is provided by the examination board; in the case of the IB, this is designed by the IB Coordinator in accordance with the IB's suggested model.
- For ongoing handy reference, students in the IBDP are issued with the IB's leaflet: 'Are you completing your IB assignments honestly?'
- Should the malpractice procedure need to be followed, staff also discuss with the student what led to the transgression in a supportive manner. Thus, guiding the student to take more appropriate action in the future.
- In the Sixth Form, students pursuing the EE/EPQ take a structured approach to their research supported by: academic honesty workshop exploring the changing nature of knowledge in a media age and the implications of that; effective citing and referencing; work-in-progress presentations; Viva Voce (EE) and final presentation (EPQ). This is continuously revisited during the 6th form, ensuring students appreciate the rationale behind why this is important, developing a culture of integrity. They are explicitly taught how to and not to use AI.
- In line with the IB, it is the school policy that feedback comments are given on one assignment draft only; many students find it hard to restrict themselves to one draft only and by adopting this policy throughout the school we prepare girls to present their work responsibly and appropriately.
- IBDP students have the draft of their Extended Essay and ToK essay checked using plagiarism detection software; students can request that the draft of further assignments be checked if they wish.

2. Malpractice procedure

Bold

Imaginative

Reflective

It is hoped that by educating students in the forms of malpractice and the need for particular integrity in the media age, our girls will develop confidence in their methods of study and present assignments in a manner that is honest. Bedford Girls' School promotes and exercises Restorative Justice and procedures are designed to support students' understanding. In the event that an assignment of any kind is found to contain information lifted from another source and not referenced, the following measures are taken:

A. Students in Years 7-9 (not studying for public examinations)

a) Class teacher suspecting malpractice approaches the student individually to explore whether they received help from another source:

- i. If the student confirms that they received help, the student is reminded of the definition of malpractice, is coached in strategies to avoid any subsequent infringement, and is asked to repeat the assignment. It might be deemed appropriate that a student's tutor be present in a supporting role during the conversation; in any case, the student's tutor, HoY and HoD is informed.
- ii. If the student denies having received any external help, their work is presented to them and discussed. The student is reminded of the definition of malpractice, is coached in strategies to avoid any subsequent infringement, and is asked to repeat the assignment. It might be deemed appropriate the tutor to be present in a supporting role during the conversation; in any case, the student's tutor, HoY and HoD is informed.

b) In both cases, any student who has received a first warning but repeats the malpractice will see the HoY for further action as necessary. The Deputy Head and, where appropriate, the Deputy Head Pastoral will be informed.

B. Years 10-13

Students experience greater freedom in, and responsibility for, their work as they move through the school and are increasingly expected to cite formally and accurately the work of others. They are also asked to work collaboratively with the additional vigilance this requires. Effective citation and referencing are skills to be taught, learnt and practised and it is natural initially for some of this learning to take place through genuine mistakes having been made. As such, the following is staged from restorative to disciplinary procedures.

- a) Malpractice in citation in non-coursework assignments in genuine error – If malpractice (envisaged in this case as, plagiarism, or collaboration that has become collusion) is suspected in a piece of work the teacher will speak to the student(s) individually and separately to ascertain if malpractice has occurred. If the teacher is satisfied that a genuine error has occurred, the teacher will clarify and coach the student(s) in how to present work honestly. The teacher will inform the tutor of the incident and circumstances, copy to the HoY and relevant HoD, and IB Coordinator as necessary. The student will rectify the error. No further action is required.
- b) First instance of malpractice in non-coursework assignment – if malpractice is suspected, the teacher should notify their HoD as soon as possible. The HoD should check with student's HoY to confirm that this is the first offence: if it is, the HoD will speak to her of the consequences of any further misconduct. The student's HoD will inform the girl's parents in writing and copy to the student's tutor and HoY, and IB Coordinator as appropriate. The student will repeat the assignment, or resubmit having rectified the error.
- c) Repeat malpractice in non-coursework – in this case, where there is evidence of malpractice and a student has previously been warned about the consequences of malpractice, the student's HoY will be informed, and this and previous instances be reported with evidence to the Deputy Head. A possible sanction could include an SLT detention, where the student completes some work on the importance of academic honesty.
- d) Malpractice detected in coursework prior to submission to board – if there is evidence of malpractice in coursework, the student will resubmit the work and this work will be completed under strict supervision.

- e) Malpractice detected in coursework by Examination board – coursework will be subject to the Exam board’s procedures and sanctions. This could lead to a student failing a subject, or, in the case of the IB, failing the Diploma.
- f) Other possible consequences – In addition to the above, any student in Years 10-13 who has faced serious disciplinary action, should be aware that the School could be obliged to report this information to universities that may require it.

ⁱ This policy should be read in conjunction with the ‘Academic Honesty Appendix’ regarding IBDP assignments.