



This policy has been written to serve the BELA community as a standardizing and clarifying document on the subject of Academic Integrity and is intended to define and elaborate on the nature of plagiarism and the various types of offenses that constitute it. BELA's Academic Integrity Policy is grounded in the IB Learner Profile Attribute "*Principled*". According to the IB Learner Profile (ten attributes valued by International Baccalaureate World Schools like BELA), being *Principled* means being someone who will "*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.*" (International Baccalaureate Organization 2013). Our mission is to empower each young woman to be the best version of herself– and we believe that begins with cultivating integrity in our community.

Plagiarism is an act of fraud and as such, does not align with the IB Learner Profile "*Principled*". At BELA, we believe that plagiarism is a serious offense, not only because it is a detriment to the author or creator of material being copied, but to the perpetrator's learning and development. It is our expectation that students will abide by this policy for all assignments in all classes while at BELA and beyond during their post-secondary experiences. This policy has been adapted from pre-existing Academic Integrity policies from other, comparable institutions with additions made that cater to BELA's specific community needs and from the International Baccalaureate Principles into Practice Guide.

We have developed this policy because:

- We believe that the ability to write and research effectively, honestly and correctly is an integral part of a student's academic and personal development.
- Plagiarism is the most common, and often misunderstood, version of academic dishonesty and we want to ensure that students and families understand its implications.
- We believe that plagiarism is ethically unacceptable and avoidable.
- We want our students to respect and understand the work that goes into academic writing and research, and how to use another author's work responsibly and honestly.
- We want our students to understand that using the work of their peers as their own with/without their consent is still deemed unacceptable since they did not co-create and/or produce the work themselves.
- We want our students to be prepared for the academic honesty policies that exist outside of and beyond BELA– students should leave BELA prepared for, and understanding of the consequences of plagiarism in higher education (which can range from course failure to loss of scholarship or admittance).
- We want to give students the necessary tools to navigate today's ever growing information landscape. The internet's size and accessibility requires students to be educated in discerning quality information from misinformation or less credible sources.
- We have noticed plagiarism occurring with more frequency, accidentally or intentionally, alongside emerging AI technologies, like ChatGPT.

BELA faculty and staff will take the following steps to prevent students dishonoring the Academic Integrity Policy before the responsibility falls upon the students:

- Teach the IB Learner Profile trait, *Principled*, through school-wide implementation during Leadership Academy, Instructional Classes, Sports Team, Power Group etc.
- Clearly communicate and discuss what constitutes as plagiarism with students at the beginning of each academic year, including the distribution of this document and making this document readily accessible to students and families year round.
- Teach students the proper use and application of the citation methods BELA uses: MLA for humanities and APA for science and math classes.
- Educate on and promote the use of plagiarism checking software amongst students before turning in assignments.
- Frequently remind students to utilize resources available to them to avoid plagiarism: the librarian, Ms. Lauren or the library website.
- Provide ongoing support and guidance to students to develop their critical thinking and writing skills, emphasizing the importance of original thought and proper attribution.
- Be transparent with students about what approaches are taken to assess potential plagiarism, which includes but isn't limited to:
 - Plagiarism detectors like AI Content Detector, CopyScape, and Grammarly.
 - Comparing past student work with the work suspected of plagiarism.
 - Teachers will keep electronic copies of students' past work in case of a plagiarism check.
 - Consulting other teachers who are familiar with that student's work.

A student will be considered to be in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy if they do any of the following, after the previous steps have been taken:

- The student has been suspected of *collusion* by a BELA team member.
 - For example: A student using the work of their peers as their own with/without their consent is still deemed unacceptable since they did not *collaborate* and/or produce the work themselves.
- The student uses the same wording of another source without documenting the source and putting the words in quotation marks.
- The student uses the ideas of another person or source without giving credit to that author or source.
- The student provides incorrect or false information about a source.
- The student *duplicates* their work for multiple assignments.
- The student uses ChatGPT or another work generator and turns that work in as their own.
- The student fails to include full citations at the end of an assignment and/or paraphrases other work without proper citation or application.
- The student engages in any other *Academic Misconduct*.

If a student is suspected of committing academic dishonesty, faculty will adhere to the following protocol:

- The teacher will check in with the student about their concern in a formal conversation and/or check-in to assess if their professional judgment is true and/or false.
 - *If false:* The teacher will apologize to the student in person, and send a follow up email explaining the situation and apology to the student's family with the MYP (Year 9 and Year 10) or DP (Year 11 and Year 12) Coordinators.
 - *If true:*
 - The teacher will document in writing, on the original student paper/work, their reasons for concluding that the assignment in question has been plagiarized. This documentation will be shared with their Instructional Coach.
 - The teacher will send an email to the student's family, the MYP (Year 9 and Year 10) or DP (Year 11 and Year 12) Coordinators and the EmpowerMENT Team within 24 hours post conversation.
 - The teacher and the MYP (Year 9 and Year 10) or DP (Year 11 and Year 12) Coordinators will have a meeting with the student accused of academic dishonesty wherein the student will be provided with a copy of their original work with the teacher's comments and conclusion for claiming the assignment was plagiarized.
 - The student will receive a 0 with an opportunity to redo the assignment. The student will not be able to receive higher than a 55% (IB Score: 1) on the redone assignment.
- If a student repeats an academic dishonesty offense, the teacher and the MYP (Year 9 and Year 10) or DP (Year 11 and Year 12) Coordinators responsible for identifying the offense will meet with the student, their family and the Head of School to determine an appropriate response: a potential community removal, a more severe grade loss, or expulsion.
- If academic dishonesty occurs in or for an IB class (DP), the IB standards of managing academic integrity will be adhered to by the teacher. This policy can be found [here](#).

The rights of the student, if suspected of a breach of academic honesty:

- Students alleged to have engaged in acts of academic dishonesty/misconduct have the right to due process in the resolution of the allegation.
 - A student found to be in violation of academic integrity has the right to appeal the instructor's decision(s). Appeals must be made in writing to the MYP (Year 9 and Year 10) or DP (Year 11 and Year 12) Coordinators, within five (5) school days following notification of the Instructor's decision(s).
 - The appeal must state the specific grounds for appeal and should include all supporting documentation.
- Students have the right to appeal only *once* for each academic integrity violation.
- Students are encouraged to meet with a Post-Secondary and/or Student Life Support counseling faculty member to explore options prior to submitting an appeal.
- Within 7 (seven) school days of receipt of a student's written appeal, the Coordinators in consultation with the Dean of EmpowerMENT and school librarian, shall request that the BELA Leadership Team convene an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel hearing.

We encourage BELA families to actively support their child's understanding of academic integrity and the consequences of plagiarism. Parents/guardians can help by:

- Familiarizing themselves with the school's Academic Integrity and discussing it with their BELA student.
- Encouraging their BELA student to develop good research and writing habits.
- Monitoring their BELA student's work and offering guidance on proper citation practices.
- Communicating with teachers or school administrators if they suspect their BELA student may be involved in plagiarism or have questions about the policy.
- Remind their BELA student of resources like [these](#) that offer [tips on avoiding plagiarism](#).
- Reiterate the idea of “when in doubt, cite” to students.

By implementing this Academic Integrity Policy, we hope to maintain a high standard of academic integrity and honesty amongst our students and faculty at BELA. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the heads of school.

Below are some key terms and definitions of words that are referenced in this document:

Academic Misconduct: which is defined by IB as “any other behavior that gives an unfair advantage to a student or that affects the results of another student (falsifying data, misconduct during an examination, creating spurious reflections)”

Citing: Using ideas, words, or facts from a source. Citing sources is the aim of research and is encouraged, as long as all information that is cited is also documented correctly.

Citation: The documentation of sources that are cited within student work.

Collaboration: The IB states “collaboration may be loosely defined as working together on a common aim with shared information”.

Collusion: The IB defines the act of collusion as “when a student uses fellow learners as an unattributed source” and/or “supporting academic misconduct by another student, as in allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another”.

Duplication: The IB defines duplication as “the presentation of the same work for different assessment components”.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work, ideas, words, or creations as your own without proper acknowledgement or citation. This includes, but is not limited to, copying and pasting text from a source without giving credit to the author, paraphrasing someone else's work without giving credit, and submitting someone else's work as your own, copying and/or using the work of a peer as your own.

Source: All materials from which students might obtain information. This may include books, newspapers, magazines, the internet, movies, television, videos,, other people, and interviews.

References

“Academic Integrity Process - Current Students: Austin Community College District. *Web*, <https://students.austincc.edu/student-rights-responsibilities/academic-integrity-process/>. Accessed Aug. 2024

“Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning.” *Web*, www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/know-your-rights/discipline-code . Accessed 6 July 2023.

“IB Academic Integrity Policy, © International Baccalaureate Organization” 2019, Oct. 2019, www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/programmes/shared-resources/pdfs/academic-integrity-policy-en.pdf . Accessed Aug. 2024

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