



## FHS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

2025-26

This document is a guide for principles, policies, and procedures related to academic integrity. It is a work in progress. Please study the document carefully and apply the policies thoughtfully. These policies and procedures will be reviewed each year by the leadership team with input and feedback from all staff. This version was updated in **Nov 2025**.

### **Mission statement**

*Focus High School is a community of lifelong learners that aims to enable children to excel in all aspects of life.*

*The school provides for students' holistic development: encouraging them to be critical and creative thinkers; guiding them to be principled and compassionate; training them for physical health; and preparing them for higher studies and work.*

*Convinced that education is a means of establishing justice and mercy in the world, Focus High School ensures that its programmes are accessible to all.*

## 1. Philosophy

Academic integrity means demonstrating and upholding honesty in all academic work. Though the definition is simple, it is an umbrella term and encompasses practices necessary for a student to become a life-long learner. Both IB and FHS believe in the student becoming a principled and caring individual who is capable of demonstrating justice and mercy. Building academic honesty and integrity develops these qualities with focus on:

- Taking responsibility of one's own work
- Respecting and valuing others' work by giving due credit
- Developing critical and creative thinking

Therefore, it is important for all members of our school community to understand what constitutes academic honesty and academic malpractice. Teachers must train the students and more importantly, model academic honesty themselves. Academic honesty must be seen as a set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. It is influenced and shaped by a variety of factors including peer pressure, culture, parental expectations, role modeling and taught skills.

*An authentic piece of work is one that is based on the [student's] individual and original ideas with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Therefore, all assignments for assessment, regardless of their format, must wholly and authentically use that [student's] own language, expression and ideas. Where the ideas or work of another person are represented within a [student's] work, whether in the form of direct quotation or paraphrase, the source(s) of those ideas or the work must be fully and appropriately acknowledged. (from "Academic Honesty," IBO, 2009)*

*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. (From the IB learner profile at: <http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/fd82f70643ef4086b7d3f292cc214962/learner-profile-en.pdf>)*

## 2. Instances of academic dishonesty

It is important for all stakeholders to be aware of the different ways through which academic honesty can be compromised and also tools and techniques that will help avoid academic dishonesty. The following is a list of various instances of academic dishonesty:

2.1. **Plagiarism:** Offering the words or ideas of another person (in whole or part) as one's own without proper acknowledgement

2.1.1. Evidencing plagiarism: Use a plagiarism checker to detect copied text from websites  
2.1.2. Tools and techniques taught to avoid plagiarism:

- Paraphrasing: Paraphrasing is expressing something written or spoken in your own words
- Citation: It is a reference to the book, author or paper

- Quotation: Restating the words of another person; indicated within quotation marks

2.2. **Cheating:** Copying from another student or making information available to another student during a test or examination. Examples of cheating include:

- Copying exams or assignments from others or allowing others to copy from your work
- Using crib sheets, notes, books and other materials in exams when not authorized to use them
- Working collaboratively when required to work independently
- Using calculators, mobile devices, laptops and other devices when not authorized to use them
- Using third-party guides or workbooks to provide readymade responses
- Asking others (friends, siblings, parents) to complete the tasks, written or remote
- Signaling answers to others or receiving signals from others in completing an exam
- Purchasing answers or keys for assignments from the web and other sources

2.2.1. Evidencing cheating:

- The invigilator records and reports the act of copying observed during an exam
- Evaluators compare answer scripts of different students (if they suspect cheating) to detect copying
- Evaluators observe that response quality is entirely different from the usual performance level of the student and inquire

2.2.2. Tools and techniques taught to avoid copying:

- Bring materials: Students must carry the required materials and not be allowed to borrow from others. Students must not bring any other items.
- Silence: Students should not be encouraged to ask doubts of any kind. Students must not communicate with others for any reason (during a pen and paper test)
- Physical distance & seating: by Students must be seated at a distance and supervised by the invigilators

2.3. **Fabricating or falsifying research data:** Fabrication or falsification involves unauthorized creation, alteration or reporting of information in an academic activity. Examples of fabrication or falsification include:

- Artificially creating data when it should be collected from an actual experiment
- Unauthorized alteration or falsification of data, documents, images, music, art or other work
- Fabricating sources of information
- Unauthorized impersonation of another person to complete an academic activity
- Unauthorized use of another individual's computer login ID and password

2.3.1. Evidence of fabrication:

- Evaluators confirm a mismatch in data readings
- User reports unauthorized access to her/his account

2.3.2. Tools and techniques:

- Communicate clear examples of what constitutes fabrication/falsification of data
- Check thoroughly the resources cited by students

2.4. **Legitimate collaboration vs unacceptable collusion:** Collaboration is students working together to achieve a common learning goal. Collusion happens when more than one student contributes to a piece of work that is submitted as the work of an individual.

Examples of collusion include:

- you are given an individual assignment and you complete the work jointly with one or more other students, handing in almost identical assignments.
- you are given an individual assignment and you get together with one or more students to plan your assignment together. This joint preparatory work might include discussing how to structure your assignments, which cases to refer to, and which sources and references to list. Even if you go on to complete your assignment relatively independently after the discussion, the submitted work may still reveal enough similarities to be considered collusion
- you lend your assignment to another student(s)
- you are part of a group assignment and any member of the group shares submitted work with another group. In this instance, all students involved will be reported for breaching the academic misconduct regulations
- you are a part of a group assignment or project and all the group members share a report that has the exact same words.

2.4.1. Evidence of collusion

- Evaluators find the same work submitted.

2.4.2. Tools and techniques:

- Ensure that when doing group work, every member has a predetermined role. This must be acknowledged in the end product that has to be submitted.
- Every student submits the end product in his/her own words and it should not be the same report that all the group members submit.

2.5. **Other forms of academic misconduct:**

- Submitting the same piece of work for more than one assignment
- Interfering in the academic work of another student, for example by stealing laboratory reports, computer files or library materials
- Altering school records or grades awarded by a teacher
- Stealing or leaking test or examination papers
- Accessing cloud storage or digital archives of the staff for assessment material or student performance records

2.6. **Examples of academic (dis)honesty:** The student takes the help of his/her friends to complete work, he/she ensures that only reference material and task-related instructions are copied. The product of the task must be students' own work with a note acknowledging the friend's help and citing resources..

### 3. Academic Honesty through 'principled action'

Learning can be retained when a student uses or applies it to real-life situations. So, action becomes integral, and as IB recommends, it needs to be a 'principled action'. For this, teachers develop an understanding of the academic honesty policy through collaboration. Having a shared understanding of the policy will help inculcate responsible actions in students so that they gradually become practitioners of academic honesty which will be exemplified through the personal project.

To ensure the principled action, the following procedure will be followed:

#### 3.1. During inquiry students ensure that they

- collect data and information related to the issue, considering multiple perspectives
- record major events related to the issue; creating a timeline helps enhance clarity
- compare the possible solutions that have been implemented and evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions
- evaluate the biases, if any

#### 3.2. Discuss the action plan

- create one or more action plans based on the findings and evaluation
- discuss the action plan with the school community
- follow up on the action plan
- reflect on how effective the action plan is in student

#### 3.3. The students need to

- know that action also means that he/she chooses not to act
- be honest and uphold integrity at all times
- respect and value others' beliefs and perspectives
- act responsibly which includes ensuring that neither self, others or the environment is harmed

### 4. Responsibilities of the school community to implement academic honesty

Academic honesty implementation is a whole-school process. All members of the school community are partners in this and need to understand their responsibilities in inculcating academic integrity in students.

#### 4.1. Leaders' responsibilities:

- Communicate the policy to the school community
- Review the policy every year in consultation with the curriculum

#### **4.2. Teachers' responsibilities**

Academic honesty is a skill that can be developed in students with proper guidance and consistent practice. To ensure this, the teacher plays a major role in communicating expectations and guidelines that will help a student avoid dishonesty at all levels. At Focus High School, we ensure that all teachers share a common understanding of these practices and consequences to be applied. All teachers must:

- 4.2.1. Practice and model academic honesty all the time.
- 4.2.2. Guide students about academic honesty and what constitutes plagiarism.
- 4.2.3. Provide clear examples to show what constitutes academic dishonesty.
- 4.2.4. Train students about how to acknowledge or cite sources properly.
- 4.2.5. Train students about how to paraphrase and use their own words.
- 4.2.6. Teach students the difference between permissible collaboration and prohibited collusion.
- 4.2.7. Notice the writing styles of students to help detect plagiarism.
- 4.2.8. Question students about their written work to determine whether the work is authentic.
- 4.2.9. Use a search engine to check if students' work is plagiarized.
- 4.2.10. Supervise students during tests or examinations.
- 4.2.11. Do not provide undue assistance to any student.
- 4.2.12. Develop assignments that encourage students to create original work, minimising the chances of dishonest work.
- 4.2.13. Be fair and just with all students when dealing with consequences for academic dishonesty.

#### **4.3. Students' responsibilities**

Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to understand academic honesty and the school's policies.

- 4.3.1. Do not copy and paste from internet sources; read, understand, paraphrase, and state the source.
- 4.3.2. Acknowledge all sources (e.g. books, websites, etc.) using standard citation style when writing assignments.
- 4.3.3. As far as possible, work independently with the support of the subject teacher.
- 4.3.4. When collaboration with other students is required or encouraged by teachers, ensure that each member fulfills their role in the group.
- 4.3.5. When collaboration with other students is required or encouraged by teachers, ensure that the final work is produced independently.
- 4.3.6. Do not submit the same piece of work for more than one assignment.
- 4.3.7. Listen to and follow all instructions given before a test or examination.
- 4.3.8. Clarify procedures to be followed while completing an assignment.
- 4.3.9. When conducting surveys, collect and process authentic data.

#### **4.4. Parents' responsibilities:**

Parents need to be partners with teachers in ensuring that their child follows academic honesty. Parents need to be more vigilant when it comes to online or blended learning because it involves the use of devices and the internet. It is critical that they understand and help their children implement it. To ensure this, the following must be adhered to.

- 4.4.1. Be aware of the various instances of academic dishonesty and ways that can help avoid them.
- 4.4.2. Avoid helping children complete tasks, assessments etc.
- 4.4.3. Encourage submission of work that is authentic (avoid plagiarism, falsification) in the student's own words.

#### **5. Procedures for recording and reporting of malpractice in internal exams**

5.1. The invigilators are authorized to inspect a student or his/her belongings if there is a justifiable need for such an action

5.2. When a student is found doing malpractice, the invigilator must immediately:

- 5.2.1. collect the answer script along with the question paper and the additional sheets
- 5.2.2. note down (1) the exact time and (2) the room number; this step is critical for collecting evidence through CCTV footage
- 5.2.3. staple the evidence collected to the answer script
- 5.2.4. submit the evidence package to the Exam Administration Officer designated for the current assessment cycle

5.3. The Exam Administration Officer must verify the evidence thoroughly and collect the student's responses in the Think Sheet before sending him/her to the School Counsellor

5.4. The School Counsellor must issue the Red Card immediately and inform the parents of the actions taken by the school:

- 5.4.1. MYP: Achievement Level 0 (Zero grade) will be awarded as a consequence of malpractice. No re-exam will be conducted under any circumstances
- 5.4.2. PYP: The student may be required to complete a think sheet before resuming assessed work.

5.5. Instances of malpractice include:

- 5.5.1. Preparing and/or bringing printed or handwritten materials to the exam venue
- 5.5.2. Using printed or handwritten materials in the exam venue
- 5.5.3. Writing notes on limbs or stationery permitted in the exam venue
- 5.5.4. Copying from a peer's work
- 5.5.5. Wilfully allowing a peer to copy work
- 5.5.6. Hiding / destroying the evidence of malpractice
- 5.5.7. Using signs and other non-verbal mechanisms to communicate the answers
- 5.5.8. Staff-assisted malpractice

5.6. Parents/guardians will be notified in all cases.

## **6. Consequences for academic malpractice**

- 6.1. Academic malpractice is considered a 'Red Card Offense' (serious misconduct) at Focus High School. All incidents are taken seriously and addressed in accordance with the school's discipline policy, which outlines procedures ranging from written warnings and reflection tasks to suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity.
- 6.2. Work found to be plagiarized or completed dishonestly will not be assessed.
  - 6.2.1. MYP: The student will receive Achievement Level 0 (Zero grade).
  - 6.2.2. PYP: The work will not be assessed in its current form. The student will receive guidance on academic honesty and will be given an opportunity to resubmit original work.
- 6.3. If the nature and timeline of the assessment allow, the teacher may provide the student with an opportunity to resubmit the task, accompanied by a reflection on the misconduct. The reassessed task will be evaluated, but the incident will still be recorded.
- 6.4. Repeated or severe cases will lead to escalated consequences, including suspension of academic privileges, academic probation, or expulsion, based on the decision of the school leadership.

## **7. Rights of students when suspected of breaching academic honesty**

At Focus High School, we believe that all students are entitled to fair treatment. When a student is suspected of academic misconduct, the following rights are guaranteed:

### **7.1. Right to Be Informed**

- 7.1.1. The student must be informed promptly and clearly about the suspected misconduct.
- 7.1.2. The nature of the concern, the evidence gathered (e.g., similarity reports, answer scripts, observed behavior), and the specific policy rules believed to be breached must be shared.

### **7.2. Right to Be Heard**

- 7.2.1. The student has the right to explain their actions and present their perspective.
- 7.2.2. They may submit evidence, such as drafts, research notes, or messages, to support their case.
- 7.2.3. An opportunity will be provided to meet the VP in person to discuss the matter respectfully and privately.

### **7.3. Right to Guidance and Support**

- 7.3.1. While the investigation is ongoing, the student will be treated with respect and confidentiality.
- 7.3.2. The student has the right to receive guidance from a teacher, mentor, or coordinator to understand the nature of the suspected breach and what constitutes academic honesty.
- 7.3.3. In appropriate cases, students may be offered support to improve citation, paraphrasing, or independent work skills as a learning opportunity.

7.4. Right to Redo the Task (when permitted)

- 7.4.1. If the breach is determined to be unintentional or a first-time offense, and if time and task type allow, the student may be permitted to redo the task under teacher supervision.
- 7.4.2. In such cases, the student will be guided on how to meet academic honesty expectations. Note: Re-submission is not permitted for formal assessments such as internal exams or externally assessed components (e.g., Personal Project, eAssessment).

7.5. Right to Confidentiality

- 7.5.1. All discussions, investigations, and decisions related to suspected misconduct will be kept confidential, shared only with relevant parties (e.g., involved teachers, coordinators, and leadership).

## ANNEXURE 1:

### SCHOOL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE POLICY

#### 1. Purpose:

This provides clear guidance on the ethical and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by students and teachers. The aim is to:

- Promote academic honesty
- Support AI as a learning tool
- Protect authenticity of student work
- Ensure transparency in how AI is used

*AI should support learning, not replace the student's own thinking.*

#### 2. AI Tools:

Any digital tool that can generate text, ideas, summaries, translations, images, explanations, or analysis (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot, Grammarly, Midjourney).

#### 3. Acceptable Use:

When AI supports understanding, brainstorming, skill-building, or improves language clarity — *without producing work on the student's behalf*.

#### 4. Unacceptable Use:

When AI completes the thinking, writing, reflection, analysis, or creates work that the student submits as their own.

#### 5. FOR STUDENTS:

DO'S - Acceptable Use of AI: AI may be used for learning support, such as:

- Generating summaries of key ideas you will later rewrite in your own words
- Exploring counter-arguments or alternative viewpoints
- Asking for explanations, clarification, or examples
- Brainstorming ideas or keywords for research
- Checking grammar, spelling, or clarity (without rewriting content)
- Getting non-assessment feedback (in-class drafts only)
- Creating templates, outlines, or structures — *if acknowledged*
- Improving sentence-level correctness (not argument development)
- Transparency is essential. Students must:
  - Declare AI use in a short statement at the end of the work
  - Cite any copied, paraphrased, or modified AI content
  - Include the prompt + date in the reference list
  - Keep drafts, notes, and version history as evidence of authentic work

DON'TS - Unacceptable Use of AI: Students **must not** use AI to perform academic tasks *for them*. AI use is NOT allowed for IB summative assessments when it:

- Writes any part of the assignment (paragraphs, intros, body sections, conclusions)
- Produces a model essay or sample essay to imitate
- Generates the research question
- Produces reflections, self-evaluations, or process journal entries
- Gives quotes without checking or reading the sources
- Rewrites or restructures the entire essay

- Generates content that is submitted as “original” work
- Translates the full assignment into the submission language
- Hides or disguises AI use
- Submitting AI-generated work as if it is your own equals: Plagiarism, Fabrication, Misrepresentation. This will be treated as academic misconduct.

## 6. FOR TEACHERS

DO's

- Use professional judgement when determining authenticity
- Ask students about sources, arguments, or drafts when in doubt
- Request drafts, plans, and process documents
- Conduct viva/oral checks if authenticity is unclear
- Allow AI for brainstorming, templates, and idea refinement
- Model ethical AI use in class

DON'Ts

- Do not authenticate work if you believe it is AI-written
- Do not provide multiple rounds of detailed feedback if AI was used to circumvent learning
- Do not use AI to write reports, feedback, or communication representing the school (unless allowed by leadership guidelines)

## 7. HOW STUDENTS MUST REFERENCE AI: In-text citation example:

- “Urban migration patterns have shifted due to...” (Generated using ChatGPT, Prompt: “Explain urban migration trends,” 14 April 2025).
- Bibliography example: OpenAI. (14 April 2025). *ChatGPT response to the prompt: “Explain urban migration trends.”*
- Declaration example (to be added at the end of work): *AI was used for brainstorming key ideas and checking grammar. No AI-generated text was copied into the submitted work.*

## 8. CONSEQUENCES OF MISUSE: AI misuse will be treated as academic misconduct. Consequences may include:

- Redoing the task under supervised conditions
- Loss of marks for authenticity-related criteria
- Non-authentication of work (for IB assessments)

AI Use	Allowed?	Conditions
Idea generation	Yes	Must be rewritten in own words
Grammar checking	Yes	No major rewriting
Counter-argument exploration	Yes	Student must understand ideas
Templates/outlines	Yes	Must be acknowledged
Whole paragraph writing	No	Not acceptable

AI-generated reflection	No	Not acceptable
Translation for IB submissions	No	Not acceptable
Copying quotes from AI	No	Must verify original source
Hiding AI use	No	Transparency required

### **MYP Personal Project**

The MYP Personal Project is a student-driven, independent inquiry. While AI tools may support skill development and understanding, all thinking, decision-making, reflection, and final work must be the student's own. AI must support the process, not replace student agency.

Students **MAY** use AI tools for:

- Clarifying concepts related to the global context or topic
- Brainstorming possible ideas (not selecting the final goal)
- Exploring alternative perspectives or examples
- Improving grammar, spelling, and sentence clarity
- Creating basic planning templates or checklists
- Receiving non-assessment feedback on early drafts
- Supporting language development
- All AI use must be acknowledged, understood by the student, documented in the process journal

Students **MUST NOT** use AI to:

- Generate the project goal, product/outcome, or success criteria
- Write any part of the report (including reflections or evaluation)
- Create or significantly reshape the process journal
- Produce design ideas or creative work submitted as original
- Provide citations or sources without verification
- refine, rewrite, or improve the language of the report.
- Imitate or adapt AI-generated exemplars
- Hide or disguise AI use

Using AI in these ways constitutes academic misconduct.

### **Consequences of AI Misuse: MYP Personal Project**

If AI use compromises the authenticity of the Personal Project:

- The work will not be internally moderated
- The student will receive Achievement Level 0 for the Personal Project
- The case will be treated as academic misconduct under IB regulations

Supervisors will:

- Guide ethical AI use throughout the project
- Monitor process journals and drafts
- Question understanding where authenticity is unclear
- Refuse moderation if the work does not reflect independent learning

## **Policy Review and Communication**

1. This policy will be reviewed annually in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and finalized only after approval by the school management.
2. It will be communicated to teachers during policy reviews and at the beginning of the academic year through orientation sessions.
3. All teachers are responsible for guiding students on academic integrity through orientation and ongoing practice.
4. It will be made available to parents on Toddle and the school website.

## **Bibliography**

1. For MLA style of citations: <https://www.citationmachine.net/mla>
2. <https://www.niu.edu/academic-integrity/students/cheating/cheating.shtml>
3. <https://ib-innovate.com/2019/06/08/principled-action-2/>

## **See also**

1. [FHS Library Policy](#)
2. FHS Discipline Policy