

# Toronto District School Board

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Operational Procedure PR.613

Title: **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Adopted: April 27, 2011

Revised:

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## **1.0 OBJECTIVE**

To provide direction to staff and students on the issues of academic honesty, including cheating and plagiarism

## **2.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

Coordinating Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

## **3.0 DEFINITIONS**

### **2.1 Cheating**

Cheating is usually defined as the act of practicing deceit or breaking the rules. In the context of assessment and evaluation, cheating would be defined as the deviation from the behaviour expected in an evaluation situation. Examples include but are not limited to:

- (a) Copying another student's homework;
- (b) Using another student's work on a test or any other evaluation;
- (c) Bringing unauthorized notes or notations into an evaluation;
- (d) Asking for or giving someone an answer during an evaluation;
- (e) Unauthorized use of electronic media to obtain answers during an evaluation;  
and
- (f) Presenting assignments that have been completed by someone else as one's own.

## 2.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another without attribution, in order to represent them as one's own original work. (Growing Success 2010 p.151)

It can take many forms, including the following:

- (a) Submitting an essay/assignment written by someone else, e.g., buying an essay online, downloading an essay from a website, having someone else complete one's assignment, or copying or using work including homework done by another student;
- (b) Piecing together material from one or several sources and adding only linking sentences;
- (c) Quoting or paraphrasing material without citing the source of that material, including, but not limited to books, magazines, journals, websites, newspapers, television programs, radio programs, movies, videos, photographs, and drawings in print or electronic form;
- (d) Copying and pasting from the internet or other electronic sites without citing the source; and
- (e) Omitting quotation marks for direct quotations even if the sources have been cited.

## 3.0 **RESPONSIBILITY**

### 3.1 Board Responsibility

To create a climate of academic honesty the Toronto District School Board will:

- (a) provide professional learning for teachers in appropriate research skills for their students;
- (b) provide print and electronic resources for student research skills;
- (c) provide professional learning in the creation of challenging assignments that demonstrate research skills; and
- (d) provide professional learning for teachers to identify work that may be plagiarized.

### 3.2 Schools

To ensure academic honesty and avoid instances of plagiarism schools in the Toronto District School Board will:

- (a) include information about academic honesty/plagiarism in student agendas in all schools, and present this information in a way that is age-appropriate and easily understood by students in all grades;
- (b) promote school practices designed to value academic honesty, discourage academic dishonesty, and protect the rights of the majority of students who are consistently honest; and
- (c) investigate and apply consequences where appropriate on a case by case basis where cheating or plagiarism is suspected.

### 3.3 Teachers

To ensure academic honesty and avoid instances of plagiarism, teachers will:

- (a) define plagiarism, and teach students the research skills that help them avoid plagiarizing (evaluating sources, note making, paraphrasing, proper citing of sources) so that students increase skills and confidence in submitting their own work for evaluation;
- (b) use a variety of excellent print and electronic resources (including ones produced by the TDSB, such as such as *Imagine the Learning: A Guide for Elementary Teacher-Librarians and Teachers to Use with Students*, 2006, and *Research Success @ Your Library*, 2010 to assist in the instruction of research skills;
- (c) provide age-appropriate instruction about students' ethical responsibility to avoid plagiarism;
- (d) create research assignments and tests that involve higher-order critical thinking that engage students, therefore reducing the opportunities for students to plagiarize;
- (e) avoid creating assignments that require students to simply gather facts on a topic without engaging in problem solving, making choices or reflecting;
- (f) give students time to work on the assignment occasionally in class so that the teacher can assess, on an ongoing basis, the research skills students are developing, and can provide support as needed;

- (g) ensure that assignments for evaluation, tests and exams are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher;
- (h) apply the procedures for dealing with instances of plagiarism consistently and fairly;
- (i) in Grades 9-12, structure major research assignments so that process steps in completing the assignment (bibliographies, thesis statements, outline, notes, drafts) are required of the students and are assessed;
- (j) ensure that students Grades 9-12 understand the function and purpose of [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) as they may be required to submit their assignments through this website;
- (k) clearly inform Grade 9-12 students of the consequences of plagiarism in the course outline distributed at the beginning of the course;
- (l) model exemplary practices, ensuring that handouts and media used in class demonstrates adherence to current copyright and public performance laws.

### 3.4 Students

To ensure academic honesty and avoid instances of plagiarism, students are expected to:

- (a) seek clarification from teachers about actions that constitute plagiarism;
- (b) seek remediation when their research skills are deficient;
- (c) understand the penalties for academic dishonesty and plagiarism; and
- (d) ensure that all their work is original and that they cite sources accurately and consistently.

## **4.0 PROCEDURES**

### 4.1 Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

It is the intention of the TDSB to provide a consistent and fair approach to dealing with instances of academic dishonesty, specifically with plagiarism and cheating. When plagiarism/cheating is detected, the following process will be followed:

#### 4.1.1 Investigation

- (a) When a teacher discovers evidence of plagiarism/cheating, the teacher will discuss the matter with the student(s) involved;
- (b) The teacher will determine if plagiarism/cheating has occurred; and
- (c) The teacher may consult with the principal/vice-principal to review the situation or whether there may be a consistent pattern of academic dishonesty.

#### 4.1.2 Communication

If the teacher confirms plagiarism/cheating has occurred:

- (a) the teacher will inform the principal/vice-principal of the specific details regarding the plagiarized assignment or the allegation of cheating and the resulting consequences;
- (b) the teacher will inform the student of the consequences of this instance of plagiarism/cheating; and
- (c) the teacher will inform the parent(s)/guardian (when the student is under the age of 18) that plagiarism/cheating has occurred and the consequences of this action.

#### 4.1.3 Minimum Consequences for Plagiarism

- (a) a mark of zero may be awarded for the assignment in question, as there has been no evidence that the student has demonstrated research skills required to demonstrate achievement of the course/curriculum expectations;
- (b) or in the professional judgment of the teacher/principal, he/she may provide an opportunity at another time for the student to demonstrate evidence of proper research skills;
- (c) and depending on the nature of the offence and in discussion with the principal/vice-principal, the student's other teachers may be alerted; and
- (d) and repeated pattern of academic dishonesty may result in an escalating severity of consequences

#### 4.1.4 Appeal

All students who face the consequences of plagiarism or cheating have the right to appeal the teacher's decision to the principal/vice-principal.

Students may appeal their case to the principal/vice-principal only after they have first discussed the matter with their teacher.

#### 4.2 Informing Students And Parents

4.2.1 Student agendas will include information on the importance of understanding the scope of cheating and plagiarism and the potential interventions and consequences of engaging in academically dishonest behaviour.

4.2.2 Schools will inform students and parents where appropriate, of the definitions of cheating and plagiarism and the consequences of such actions. In Grades 1-12, teachers will review academic honesty with students at the beginning of the course or school year.

#### 4.3 Facilitating Academic Honesty In Students

4.3.1 Teachers support students in the development of the skills and habits that make them successful learners. As part of this responsibility, teachers use their professional judgment to select strategies that will assist students to complete their work in an academically honest manner.

4.3.2 Teachers support the development of effective research strategies.

4.3.3 Teachers will be clear in their expectations for student behaviour during assessment activities and tasks.

## 5.0 **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

### **Ministry Documents**

- Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition, Covering Grades 1 – 12, 2010
- Supporting your Child's Learning through Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

### **TDSB Documents**

#### Policy and Procedure

- P.040 CUR: Accountability for Student Achievement:
- Procedure PR548 - Promotion, Transfer and Retention: Grades 1 to 8
- Procedure PR590 - Plagiarism Detection Service

#### Guidelines

- Fresh AER : Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Elementary Schools
- Fresh AER: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Secondary Schools