

SUSQUEHANNA TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

**POLICY**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Susquehanna Township School District considers academic honesty to be the foundation of its educational program. Academic honesty is a fundamental expectation in course work completed by students. Cheating and plagiarism compromise the educational integrity of the school district's educational programs. All work submitted as part of course requirements must be the original work of the student. The faculty and administration of Susquehanna Township School District believe that enforcing rules against student cheating and academic dishonesty will enhance the validity of the educational program for every student. The District uses the following definitions when dealing with issues of academic honesty:

**Cheating** is the submission of work that is not one's own. Cheating may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Copying someone else's work.
- Allowing someone to copy your work.
- Cheating on a test, soliciting or facilitating answers from/to other students during testing situations.
- Submitting of individual assignments which, in the opinion of the teacher, have been shared improperly with other students.
- Receiving assistance on an assignment that was to be completed independently.
- Purchasing the work of others, copying files to and from disks and websites, and file sharing.

**Plagiarism** is defined as the "false assumption of authorship; the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind and presenting it as one's own" (Gibaldi, 30-31). Plagiarism may take the form of repeating someone else's sentences as one's own, adopting a particularly apt phrase as one's own, paraphrasing someone else's argument as one's own, or even presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were one's own. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that one has written or thought something that one has in fact borrowed from another. Although a writer may use other people's words or thoughts, the writer must acknowledge those words with a citation (Gibaldi, 30-31). Any use of or purchase of a paper that did not originate with the student is a blatant example of plagiarism.

**Approved by School Board November 24, 2003**

**Unauthorized Materials and Devices** is defined as the use of aids, whether by written, verbal or electronic means.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999.

### **Procedures**

It is the responsibility of all teachers to uphold the principles of the Academic Honesty Policy. Each teacher must be familiar with and reinforce the policy with students. All classroom teachers are required to review the policy with students at the beginning of the school year. Secondary students will be required to sign a statement, found on the final page of the document, which indicates that they have read and understand the policy.

Teachers of English/Language Arts are required to review the policy with all students at the beginning of each semester. Teachers assigning research papers, projects, essays, compositions, term papers, and scientific reports are required to review the Academic Honesty Policy with students and must attach a copy of the Academic Honesty Verification Form to the assignment. Secondary students will be required to sign the District's Academic Honesty Policy Verification Form when submitting any research project or paper.

The Academic Honesty Policy will be posted in all classrooms. Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, the policy will be included in the High School and Middle School Handbooks and will be posted on the District's web page.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy will be cumulative from grade six through grade eight and from grade nine through grade twelve. Disciplinary referrals for violations of the policy will be maintained in a student's disciplinary file for each of the aforementioned time periods.

If plagiarism is suspected, the teacher will follow one or more of the steps listed below:

1. Seek the original source and compare it to the student's work.
2. Request clarification from the student. A teacher may ask the student to define unusual or particularly difficult words or phrases that have been used, or to explain terms or passages that are not attributed to another source. Failure to correctly do the above when information has been put forth as the student's own work will be sufficient confirmation that the work is not original.
3. Request original sources. A teacher may request that a student bring in the original source (or a photocopy) of material used in the paper, for the purpose of comparing the two. This may include hard copies of material obtained through computer services. If the student declines to do so, or if a comparison shows that the paper includes verbatim or nearly verbatim materials, this will be sufficient evidence of plagiarism.

4. Document the offense(s) through the disciplinary referral process.

### **Offenses**

**Level I**—Copying homework or other assignments and submitting it as though it were one’s own work, allowing others to copy work, and cheating. Any situation involving dishonesty in preparing academic assignments either in or out of school.

**Level I Consequences**—One to five violations will result in a zero for each assignment. A failing grade will be issued to a student who cheats on a quiz, test, or project. The teacher submitting the disciplinary referral for a violation of the policy will notify the parent.

**Level II**—An established pattern of Level I policy violations (five Level I violations) and the use of non-authorized materials during testing.

**Level II Consequences**—Student will receive a zero for the assignment or test and a Saturday detention. The teacher submitting the disciplinary referral for a violation of the policy will notify the parent.

### **Level III**

- A. **Plagiarism**--Plagiarism is an automatic Level III offense. Three or more Level II offenses is also a Level III offense. A Level III offense addresses any situation involving dishonesty in preparing academic assignments either in or out of school.
- B. **Cheating, Plagiarism and Dishonest Conduct Related to Competitions**-- A Level III offense addresses any situation involving dishonesty in competitions either in or out of school. This provision includes school activities, such as, but not limited to, quiz bowl, math competitions, science fair, music competitions, Scholastic Writing, Scholastic Art, essay contests, and other competitions sponsored or promoted by the school.

### **Level III Consequences**

A. **Plagiarism**-- A failing grade for the assignment will be issued to a student who plagiarizes the work of another. The assignment must be resubmitted, but in no case will the grade be higher than 65 percent, and it may be lower. The decision will be strictly that of the teacher. In the case of an assignment such as a research paper or project that even if the highest grade is a zero. Failure to resubmit a mandatory assignment will result in an “Incomplete” for a grade.

**Last Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Identification Number** \_\_\_\_\_

An “Incomplete” grade will prevent a student from attending summer school or receiving any credit for the entire course. Principal will schedule a parent conference.

B. Cheating, Plagiarism and Dishonest Conduct Related to Competitions—A student who cheats or plagiarizes as part of an extra-curricular academic competition, either as an individual or as part of an academic team, will be barred from participating in that extra-curricular activity during his/her remaining time at the high school or middle school. The principal will schedule a parent conference.

Second Offense—A second Level III plagiarism offense will result in a “Failure” (F) for the course and will make the student ineligible to receive any school recognition, such as membership in the National Honor Society or academic awards for the duration of the student’s academic career at Susquehanna Township High School or Middle School.

**We have read and understand the Academic Honesty Policy as stated above.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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**ACADEMIC HONESTY VERIFICATION FORM**

I understand the posted Susquehanna Township School District Academic Honesty Policy. I have not violated the policy during the completion of this assignment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

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