

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

MAHATMA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, AHMEDABAD

Mahatma Gandhi International school believes in the ethos of joyful learning and meaningful experiential pedagogy. It is a place where we give students tools to communicate through our unique multi-sensorial methodology and active learning pedagogy. Diversity here is a tool in the learning process and this diversity is reflected in the student and teacher profile, the range of teaching methodology and the use of resources. Our approach is holistic and student centered. We cater to individual needs and adapt to the background of each student through differential teaching.

B. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi International school agrees with the policy statement of the International Baccalaureate Organization that defines malpractice as behavior that results in or may result in, the student or any other student gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment components.

We believe that in order to have an authentic piece of work, students must use their individual and original ideas alongside the work of others fully acknowledged. The school ensures that students understand that the process that builds towards the final content of a research project is inherently a part of it. Hence, the students understand the significance of citation. They understand and follow that all assignments, written or oral, completed for assessment must use their own language and expression. Where sources are used or referred to, whether in the form of direct quotation or paraphrase, they must be appropriately acknowledged. They use either author-date or reference list styles of citation, to give credit to others' ideas and acknowledge their use of and engagement with them.

C. Policy Statement

Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable behaviors. At MGIS, each teacher endeavors to instill in the students the awareness of academic honesty, which when breached undermines severely the learning process.

The school believes that authors have a right to their own work, and must be acknowledged by following accepted procedures for citation and attribution.

The guidelines on Academic Honesty, and the standard format of referencing that the school prescribes to are available to the students in the handbook, as well as prominently displayed in the classrooms and the library.

The school ensures that students are introduced to the concept of academic honesty and need for citation at an early age. We instill the practice from Grade 3 onwards, where students are encouraged to name their sources informally, every time. As the children progress from program to program, their understanding of the system of citation increases, so that in the MYP the students have a clear comprehension of the need for and the convention of citation.

The school ensures that all parents and students are informed and understand the school's ethos on academic honesty. To this effect, all students in the MYP, DP and CP programs, along with their parents, sign a Declaration of Understanding, accepting the school's strict views about plagiarism. The school's form of citation and referencing are prominently displayed in each classroom and in the school library.

C.1 Authorship & Intellectual Property

Authorship denotes having created or produced a piece of work through one's own abilities. This may be a piece of work submitted or even an idea expressed in the class. If such work is a result of using another person's ideas, skills or abilities without due acknowledgment, such work is deemed inauthentic and constitutes a breach of academic honesty.

Intellectual Property is any piece of original work created by an individual or group of individuals. When used by others, such work must be appropriately cited, following recognized conventions of referencing.

C. 2 Classroom Practices:

At MGIS, teachers

1. Guide the research process.
2. Provide guidelines to students on how to use all forms of resources adequately – including information and communication technology (ICT) in various assessments.

3. Inculcate honest practices that align with the grade level, assessment tasks, and available resources.
4. Develop the meaning of academic honesty with reference to:
 - a) Personal practices: integrity, willingness to work independently, self-evaluation, determination to achieve individual potential through one's own work.
 - b) Social practices: Working in collaboration with peers, acknowledge contribution of other group or team members, evaluate the work of peers, acknowledge others' ideas, physical skills, and/or techniques.
 - c) Citation and Referencing: identifying the sources which require acknowledgment, what constitutes plagiarism, format of writing bibliographies and footnotes.

C.3 Academic Honesty and the use of AI:

We embrace innovation while teaching responsible use of AI. Teachers educate students on how to:

- Recognize AI's limitations and biases
- Critically analyse AI-created materials
- Use AI-generated sources with proper citation
- Use images created by AI, analysing their relevance to the material and citing them appropriately
- By engaging with AI, students develop critical research skills and technological innovation awareness.

D. Defining Malpractice

D.1 Plagiarism: This is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the student's own. This includes expressions of ideas or concepts (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, or electronic). Plagiarism also includes paraphrasing an idea or thought without citation or acknowledgment, even if the omission is inadvertent.

D.2 Collusion: This is defined as supporting malpractice by another student to give the other an unfair and undeserved academic advantage. An example of collusion would be a student allowing his or her work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another.

D.3 Duplication of work: This is defined as the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or IB Diploma requirements.

D.4 Any other behavior: Behavior allowing the student to gain an unfair advantage or that affects the results of other students (for example, taking unauthorized material into an assessment, falsifying a Community Service record, disclosure of information to and receipt of information from students about the content of an examination paper within 24 hours after a written examination).

E. Consequences of breach of policy:

Policy Steering Committee: The school has put in place an Ethics Committee. The Head of School or his/her representative, Program Coordinators and the chairperson of the school council are standing members of the committee, which will also include the concerned class teacher and the supervising teacher at the time when a breach is discovered.

First Breach: If the offense is a first occurrence, the student will have the opportunity to explain him/herself to the Ethics Committee. Depending on the suitability of the explanation, the committee may choose to resolve the matter, or if no satisfactory resolution is reached, refer the matter to the class council, who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

Second Breach: In case of a repeat offense, the matter is first presented before the class council who decide on the basis of the student's explanation or circumstances of breach. The matter is then referred to the Policy Steering Committee with a proposal for further action, based on which the committee will decide on the appropriate resolution. The student has the opportunity to represent themselves in front of the Policy Steering Committee before a course of action is decided.

Third Breach: If a third instance of violation of the Academic Honesty Policy is encountered, the matter is handled by the Policy Steering Committee. They decide on a course of action depending on the gravity of the situation, which may range from a final warning to temporary or permanent expulsion from the school.

F. Format of Citation

The school prescribes to the Chicago Manual of Style for reference list style or author-date style. The Chicago style offers writers a choice of several different formats. It invites the mixing of formats, provided that the result is clear and consistent. The Chicago system of documentation is streamlined to achieve greater consistency between the author-date and notes-bibliography systems of citation, making both systems easier to use. This convention also addresses the documenting of online and digital sources, and citing social networking sites.

G. Policy Steering Committee:

The steering committee for Academic Honesty will consist of the Head of School, the School Director, the Coordinators of the programs and the Teacher Librarian. The roles of each of these members is defined clearly in this policy document

Head of School & School Director: will guide the school's academic honesty policy. They will, in consultation with the program coordinators, make decisions on breach of policy cases.

Pedagogical Director: is an active contributor and steers the team in designing and implementing the Academic Integrity Policy. The Pedagogical Director initiates periodic review of the policy.

Program Co-coordinators: are responsible for ensuring that teachers make academic honesty an integral part of learning for their students. Teachers should be constantly aware and vigilant about any breaches of the policy from a young age to prevent misunderstanding or breach of academic integrity, be it inadvertent or willful.

Teacher Librarian: ensures that students develop their research skills. Students learn the Chicago Manual of Style referencing convention. They learn how to create a bibliography and a list of references. They learn what a citation is and how to cite effectively.

Class teachers: make a conscious effort to instill in all students a sense of integrity in their referencing from early on.

H. Signing off on Policy

A Policy Steering Committee is defined, and roles and responsibilities of the members assigned with a view to periodically reviewing the Academic Honesty Philosophy and Policy of the school. This policy and all further amendments to the same should be approved and signed off by the Policy Steering Committee and School Management.