Academic Honesty Policy
St. Thomas High School

• **Definition of Academic Honesty**

St. Thomas High School defines Academic Honesty as a set of values that promotes personal integrity, and good practices in teaching, learning, and assessment. These values can be influenced by family attitudes, peer pressure, role modeling, and taught skills. (IBO, 2009) It is our mandate as a school to create an environment that will foster these values.

• **Building Skills that Promote Academic Honesty**

The values that foster Academic Honesty will grow as parents, teachers, and students focus on developing skill sets in the following areas.

• **Personal Skills**
  - Developing a sense of integrity
  - Developing a sense of confidence in one’s own work
  - Learning to work independently
  - Practicing self-evaluation
  - Building a determination to achieve one’s potential

• **Social Skills**
  - Learning how to work collaboratively
  - Practicing contributing to a group or team
  - Acknowledging work by other group or team members
  - Practicing peer-evaluation

• **Technical Skills**
  - Recognizing when the work of others (their words, ideas, or techniques) needs to be acknowledged
  - Understanding plagiarism,
  - Learning how to construct a bibliography
  - Learning how to reference correctly

It is the responsibility of the student to strive to develop the needed skills, and it is the duty of parents to support this journey through discussions, and role modeling. Similarly the school will foster the development of these skills through discussions, role modeling and teaching the necessary technical skills.
• **Academic Honesty and the Learner Profile**

All students at St Thomas High School are encouraged to develop the qualities of the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile during their years at the school. Students are encouraged to become: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective, (IBO, 2007).

The Learner Profile quality most associated with Academic Honesty is being principled. A principled person acts with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, group, and community. Principled people take responsibility for their own actions, and accept the consequences of those actions (IBO, 2007). In other words, principled people would never put forth the work of others as their own, but instead would present their own efforts honestly. A principled person would not cheat or plagiarize.

• **The Responsibility of Students**

  • **Respect the intellectual property of others**

In all academic work it is essential to give credit to the people and sources from which information and ideas are taken. All print, electronic, and all other forms of communication must be cited. Failing to do so constitutes intellectual theft and is called plagiarism. In its broadest sense, plagiarism means to take the words or ideas of someone else and to use them as your own. It includes using direct quotes and paraphrasing without giving credit to the original author. It is important to remember to also give other students credit for their work.

Students who are unsure about whether or not to provide a citation for a piece of information should ask their teacher and/or cite the source to be safe.

Some useful web sites to help students with proper citation are:

- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/) - MLA style (most commonly used in English)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/) - APA style (most commonly used in Social Sciences)
- [http://library.osu.edu/sites(guides/chicagogd.php](http://library.osu.edu/sites(guides/chicagogd.php) (Chicago Manual of Style aka CMS has footnotes – most commonly used in History)

Students who plagiarize:

- Will receive a mark of zero for the assignment
• Will have their parents/guardians informed about the plagiarism by the school administration
• May be referred to the guidance counselor
• Will be liable for suspension at any repeat offense

**Allow for honest evaluation**

Evaluation is an essential part of the learning process. It allows teachers to assess where students need extra support in their learning. As such, it is important that students are honest in evaluation situations by following the instructions and guidelines for proper completion of an evaluation task set out by the teacher. Failing to do so constitutes cheating. A few guidelines to prevent this from happening are outlined below.

During examinations, students should refrain from:

• obtaining or attempting to obtain information from another student or unauthorized source
• giving or attempting to give information to another student
• using or attempting to use any unauthorized material

In all evaluation situations students should refrain from:

• submitting evaluation materials for which credit has previously been obtained, or which has previously been submitted in another course falsely accusing others of cheating or attempting to do so

Students who are dishonest during an evaluation situation:

• will receive a zero for the evaluation task
• the administration and parents/guardians will be informed
• the student and his/her parents/guardians will meet with the appropriate vice-principal
• the student may be referred to the guidance counselor
• repeat offenders will be liable for suspension

(St. Thomas Agenda Book, 2011)
• The Responsibility of Teachers

• Creating an atmosphere of academic honesty

With the support of the school administration, teachers should strive to create a classroom and school culture that promotes good academic practice and requires academic honesty. This can be developed in a variety of ways:

• Discussions on respect for intellectual property
• Structuring assignments to ensure students must do more than “cut and paste” from sources. Teachers should create instructions for assignments or projects that ensure students will develop their own ideas through problem-solving, comparison, hypothesizing, and analyzing. (IBO 2009)

• Teaching the conventions for acknowledging sources

• Teachers should work with their colleagues to ensure that there is an organized and consistent effort across subjects and grade levels to teach the conventions for acknowledging sources
• Teachers should provide students with examples of how to acknowledge a variety of sources, including journals, books, websites, CD-Roms, DVDs, photographs, illustrations, art work, films and TV programmes.

• The Responsibility of Parents

• Creating an atmosphere of academic honesty

Parents should strive to create a family culture that promotes good academic practice and requires academic honesty. This can be developed in a variety of ways:

• Discussions on respect for intellectual property
• Support of school-imposed sanctions in the case of any infractions.

Sept. 2011