

Policy

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that all assignments submitted by students at the Morris County Vocational School District be their own product and a result of their own efforts. Engaging in academically dishonest activity is not only unethical, but also illegal. Students caught acting in an academically dishonest manner may face disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, the reduction of a grade, loss of credit, failure of an assignment, loss of membership in honor societies, loss of eligibility for enrollment in honors courses, loss of eligibility for leadership positions, loss of eligibility for senior-year college option, loss of eligibility for graduation privileges, detention(s), suspension(s) and documentation of the infraction on the student's permanent record.

Morris County Vocational School District distinguishes between four types of academic dishonesty: cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and forgery. Classifications and procedures for the different levels of offenses are laid out in this policy.

Cheating

Cheating is recognized as intentionally using or attempting to use any unauthorized materials, information, or study aids during an academic activity. It is also considered cheating if an individual copies answers or any other information during an academic activity without the consent of the instructor to work with others. If the instance of cheating created a disturbance during an academic activity, the student involved may face disciplinary action.

Levels of Cheating

Level I cheating involves soliciting and/or copying answers for a homework or in-class assignment.

Level II cheating occurs when a student solicits answers or any other information from another student for a quiz, test, project, or any other major assignment.

Level III cheating is defined as a deliberate or premeditated attempt to gain an advantage on a quiz or test. This includes, but is not limited to, the presence of unauthorized study materials (e.g. notes) or devices (e.g. cell phones, MP3s, laptops).

Level IV occurs when the student has engaged in academic dishonesty, in any way, for the second time.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Facilitating academic dishonesty occurs when a student assists another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to, actions such as discussing answers or any other information during, or in advance of, an academic activity without the consent of the instructor to work with others. If the instance of facilitating academic dishonesty created a disturbance during an academic activity, the students involved may face disciplinary action.

Levels of Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Level I facilitation involves providing another student with answers for a homework or in-class assignment.

Level II facilitation occurs when a student provides answers or any other information to another student for a quiz, test, project, or any other major assignment.

Level III facilitation is defined as a deliberate or premeditated attempt to assist another student in gaining an advantage on a quiz or test. This includes, but is not limited to, providing a peer with unauthorized study materials (e.g. notes) or devices (e.g. cell phones, MP3s, laptops).

Level IV occurs when the student has engaged in academic dishonesty, in any way, for the second time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a person passes off someone else's work as his or her own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites or a peer's work, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. Plagiarism can be evident in written, audio, or visual material.

Levels of Plagiarism

Level I occurrence would involve the student's use of phrases or a few lines of text or a paragraph without proper citation. Most of the student's work is still his or her own.

Level II plagiarism is more serious. It involves the student's use of multiple paragraphs of someone else's work, and/or the use of someone else's ideas without the proper attribution, and/or repeated paraphrasing without proper attribution. While some of the work is the student's own, it is clear that significant portions of the student's work are not his/her own.

Level III plagiarism is when most, if not all, of the work has been copied from another source.

Level IV occurs when the student has engaged in academic dishonesty, in any way, for the second time.

Range of Consequences For Cheating, Facilitating Academic Dishonesty, and Plagiarism

In accordance with the discipline policy, any instance of academic dishonesty results in a Saturday detention, as well as one of the following stipulations:

- A. A grade reduction on the assignment in question.
- B. A grade of zero (0) for the assignment in question with no opportunity to make up that work in any way, including extra credit work.
- C. If the severity of the situation merits it, the student shall be given a grade of F for the quarter of the course in which the incident of academic dishonesty has occurred. An F may equal zero to 59 points and shall be determined by the Academic Integrity Committee.
- D. In unusual situations, where the gravity of the infraction is so great, the Academic Integrity Committee reserves the right to administer consequences beyond the identified range.

A second instance of academic dishonesty, and any additional infractions thereafter, results in a suspension, with the length of the suspension to be determined by the Academic Integrity Committee. A second instance of academic dishonesty may also result in the application of more than one of the stipulations noted above.

Forgery

Forgery is defined as the creation of a false document or alteration of a genuine one that results in the communication of inaccurate information. This includes any document that requires information and/or a signature from a parent/guardian, employer/internship mentor, MCST staff member, or any other official/professional.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)Levels of Forgery

Level I forgery results in a minor distortion of the facts, including, but not limited to, an instance where the overall intent is not to deceive but results in a misrepresentation of the facts.

Level II forgery results in a moderate distortion of the facts, including, but not limited to, an instance where an individual's intent is misrepresented or information is altered.

Level III forgery results in a major distortion of the facts, including, but not limited to, an instance where an individual is misrepresented or information is fabricated.

Level IV occurs when the student has engaged in academic dishonesty, in any way, for the second time.

Range of Consequences For Forgery

In accordance with the discipline policy, any instance of academic dishonesty results in a Saturday detention, as well as one of the following stipulations:

- A. A loss of credit for the hours (internship). A grade reduction on the assignment in question (academic assignment).
- B. A loss of credit for the hours and a grade reduction to 59 for the marking period in which the infraction occurred (internship). A grade of zero (0) for the assignment in question with no opportunity to make up that work in any way, including extra credit work (academic assignment).
- C. If the severity of the situation merits it, the student shall be restricted from completing hours at the site at which the infraction is associated. The accused student will need procure a new internship and the Academic Integrity Committee will determine the hours required to complete the internship (internship). If the severity of the situation merits it, the student shall be given a grade of F for the quarter of the course in which the incident of academic dishonesty has occurred. An F may equal zero to 59 points and shall be determined by the Academic Integrity Committee (academic assignment).
- D. In unusual situations, where the gravity of the infraction is so great, the Academic Integrity Committee reserves the right to administer consequences beyond the identified range.

A second instance of academic dishonesty, and any additional infractions thereafter, results in a suspension, with the length of the suspension to be determined by the Academic Integrity Committee. A second instance of academic dishonesty may also result in the application of more than one of the stipulations noted above.

Procedure for Addressing Academic Dishonesty

When a teacher has reason to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, the following steps will be taken:

A. Option 1 – Teacher Action

The teacher will investigate the matter with the student(s) involved.

1. The teacher will communicate the outcome of his/her investigation to the immediate Supervisor.
2. The teacher, in consultation with the Supervisor, may decide to issue a consequence, and will communicate this decision in writing to the student and his/her parents as well as the guidance counselor. This letter will be placed in the student's file. If a parent/student wishes to appeal the teacher's consequence, the Academic Integrity Committee may be convened to review the matter.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)

B. Option 2 – Teacher Action

The teacher, in consultation with the Supervisor, may refer the incident to the Academic Integrity Committee for the following reasons:

1. The student denies the charge of academic dishonesty.
2. Several students are involved in the infraction, and the teacher does not have the capacity to perform a comprehensive investigation.
3. Other criteria warrant a broader investigation of the charge.

The teacher will forward copies of all pertinent information to the Academic Integrity Committee prior to the hearing. A written request for a hearing, specifying the scope of the investigation, will be submitted and forwarded to the head of the Academic Integrity Committee.

C. Academic Integrity Committee

1. Upon receiving a referral, the Academic Integrity Committee will hold a hearing and investigate the charges of academic dishonesty.
2. In order to assure a student's due process rights, the student and parents of the student facing the charge of academic dishonesty will be informed prior to the hearing.
3. The student will have an opportunity to appear and may be accompanied by a parent and/or counselor before the Academic Integrity Committee to shed light on the charges.
4. The Academic Integrity Committee will interview other staff or students related to the inquiry.
5. The chairperson of the Academic Integrity Committee will provide a written account identifying the outcome of the hearing and disciplinary consequences to the student, counselor, and parents of the student. If a share-time student is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty, a letter will be sent to the guidance department of their home district.
6. In all cases where a student is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty, a formal letter will be placed in the student's file, describing the action and confirming the consequence(s) meted out by the school.
7. The due process rights of students will always be ensured.

The Academic Integrity Committee will make the final decision concerning consequences on any case brought forward. The Committee may affirm the teacher's consequence or institute consequences with lesser or greater severity.

Standing Committee

This committee shall be formed in the spring of every year to begin its service in the fall of the next school year. Members shall serve for one year. The committee shall consist of five members: two administrators (one of whom will serve as the chairperson), a representative from the guidance department and two classroom teachers (each teacher to be from a different department). Decisions of the committee may be appealed to the superintendent/principal within three school days after receipt of notice and may be made only on the basis of new evidence.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (continued)

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Key Words

Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, Fabrication, Facilitating Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 2A:38A-1 et seq. Computer System
N.J.S.A. 2C:20-25 Computer Related Theft
N.J.S.A. 18A:7A – 11 Annual report of local school district; contents; annual report of commissioner; report on improvement of basic skills
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-35 School Internet websites; disclosure of certain student information prohibited
N.J.A.C. 6A:24-1.4, 2.2, 4.1, 6.1
N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq. Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts

Possible

Cross References: *1220 Ad hoc advisory committees
 *1410 Local units
 3517 Security
 *3541.33 Transportation safety
 *4131/ 4131.1 Staff development; inservice education/visitation conferences
 4148 Employee protection
 *4231/4231.1 Staff development; inservice education/visitation conferences
 4248 Employee protection
 5000 Concepts and roles in student personnel
 5010 Personal goals and objectives for students
 *5020 Role of parents/guardians
 *5114 Suspension and expulsion
 *5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
 *5127 Commencement activities
 *5131 Conduct and discipline
 5145 Rights
 5145.2 Freedom of speech/expression
 *5145.4 Equal educational opportunity
 *5145.6 Student grievance procedure
 *6164.4 Child study team
 *6171.4 Special education
 *6172 Alternative educational programs

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.