

Academic Integrity Policy

Scientific Tools and Techniques Fernbank Science Center

Fernbank Science Center highly values academic integrity because it impacts your ability to learn, your rapport with teachers, and your permanent academic record. Because scientists are making new discoveries and uncovering facts, academic honesty is taken very seriously. We ask that you therefore act like scientists by practicing academic integrity.

Per Dekalb County Schools policy, students will not engage in an act of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, falsifying school records, forging signatures, making or providing false statements to teachers, administrators or other School District personnel, cheating, bribery, or using an unauthorized computer user ID or password. Students who choose not to abide by this academic integrity policy will be penalized.

Why is Academic Integrity Important?

Academic integrity can be summed up in one word: honesty. Failing to uphold academic integrity means you are lying to yourself, your instructors, and others. When you are academically dishonest (e.g. cheating, plagiarizing, copying, etc.), you are:

- telling your teachers, parents, future college reviewers, etc. that you know/understand information you actually do not, can do something you actually cannot do, and/or have achieved something you actually did not achieve.
- taking credit for someone else's hard work.
- cheating yourself out of the opportunity to learn and to develop critical thinking skills.

In short, academic dishonesty harms you and those around you more than it will ever help you.

What are the Expectations for Academic Integrity?

Honesty

We expect you to be honest with teachers and administrators, particularly with regard to missed days of school and missed assignments.

Group Work

While you may be given the opportunity to work in groups in STT classes, all of your work must be in your own words. Two students should not have the same exact answers on any assignment; in other words, do not copy answers from another student, even if you are allowed to work together on an assignment. If there are excessive similarities between any two (or more) students' work, all students involved will be penalized. These policies extend beyond the classroom, as well. Students may not use text, chat, phone, etc. to share answers to homework, quizzes, etc. outside of class.

Whether inside or outside of class, students may not copy from one another on tests and quizzes, share test information with other students, utilize stolen tests/materials, or submit any test or assignment completed by someone else as their own. These are considered to be serious offenses and will be immediately reported to the offending students' home schools.

Using Resources

You may only use specified resources for any assignment. For example, you should only use your textbook and notes to answer questions based on the textbook. *Be aware: the internet is not part of your notes!* All of your work on tests and homework should also be in your own words. Putting information in your own words helps you better learn and recall.

You may not use any outside resources for tests and quizzes unless noted by your instructor. If you are allowed to use outside resources (e.g., an open-notes test), you may only use the resources your instructor specifies.

Plagiarism

You must cite (list a reference for) any and all resources you use to complete your assignments. This does not include your notes and textbook – you can use those without citing. See the Reference Guidelines document for instructions on how to format and include citations.

Any information you use from outside resources must also be put in your own words. If you copy information word-for-word, it must be placed within quotation marks. Failing to put information in your own words, properly quote, or cite your sources constitutes plagiarism.

Laboratory Work

Science is exploratory. Sometimes your results will not make sense, let alone match your hypothesis, and that's ok; in fact, it happens often to scientists. Be honest with your lab work – results, hypothesis, methods, error, etc. Do not change your hypothesis to fit your results, or your results to fit your hypothesis. Instead, work to explain why your results did not match your hypothesis.

Consequences for Failing to Uphold Academic Integrity

Should a student choose to commit academic dishonesty, they will be penalized for their actions as follows. Academic integrity offenses are summed across both STT courses (Biology and Environmental Science).

First offense: The assignment will receive a zero. At the teacher's discretion, the student will be given an opportunity to re-do the assignment with extra requirements or do an alternate assignment to ensure the student understands what constitutes academic dishonesty and how to avoid it in the future. The offending student's parents will be called.

Second offense: The assignment will receive a zero, with no opportunity to make up the work. The offending student's parents will be called. The violation will be noted on the student's permanent record (Infinite Campus).

Third offense: The student's home school will be contacted to assign disciplinary consequences (e.g. suspension). The assignment will receive a zero, with no opportunity to make up the work. The offending student's parents will be called, and the violation will be noted on the student's permanent record.

Academic Integrity Policy: Agreement Form

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I, _____ (print student's name) have read and understand Fernbank Science Center's Academic Integrity Policy. I agree to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy and be honest in my work at FSC. I take full responsibility for my academic integrity and accept the consequences if I commit academic dishonesty.

Student signature

Date

Group

Parent signature

Date