

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY
Guidelines

Ministry of Education

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INTRODUCTION

Saskatchewan's education system fosters academic integrity and student responsibility among all of its students. Many schools and school divisions have developed policies, procedures and expectations of students related to academic integrity and student responsibility. This document provides background information and a model policy that will be helpful to teachers, trustees and administrators in developing and implementing consistent policy and procedures, particularly related to academic integrity and late assignments. Further consideration will be given to these areas of interest as part of the development of an overall approach to student assessment for Saskatchewan's schools.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education promotes and encourages a consistent approach to academic integrity and student responsibility within its curriculum and policies. Boards of education, through their administration, should establish and communicate expectations of students concerning academic integrity and student responsibilities, including timely submission of school work and avoiding plagiarism. This can include an articulation of policy and procedures to ensure a consistent approach.

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words, ideas or creations as one's own whether deliberate or accidental. It is the process of taking another person's work, ideas or words, and using them as if they were your own. Plagiarism includes copyright infringement, as well as the use of non-copyright materials, such as copying a paper written by a family member or friend and using it as if it were your own.

How is plagiarism different from copyright infringement?

Copyright is the exclusive legal right granted by law to produce, reproduce, adapt, publish, perform, or sell a work, including the right to authorize others to do so. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual copies something that is the exclusive legal right of the copyright holder without authorization. Copyright owners have the right under the federal

Copyright Act to seek remedies in court from defendants charged with copyright infringement. Boards of education and their staffs are responsible to understand and adhere to copyright laws.

What is academic integrity?

Academic integrity is evidence of one's own learning through demonstration of responsibility, honesty, trust and respect. Actions such as cheating; plagiarism; having others complete the work (e.g., parents/guardians); buying papers from the internet; or, re-submission of previously submitted work are all examples of actions that are not in keeping with academic integrity.

It is important for students to understand the meaning and relevance of academic integrity and student responsibility. When students adopt values, beliefs and behaviours associated with academic integrity and responsibility they can claim work as their own, take an active role in their own education and develop ethics and habits that will serve them well in the future as they pursue further education or employment.

What are the ministry's expectations of boards of education in relation to plagiarism and student responsibility?

Boards of education, through their administration, should ensure that schools establish and communicate expectations of students concerning academic integrity and responsibilities, including timely submission of school work and avoiding plagiarism. This may include an articulation of policy and procedures to ensure a consistent approach across the school division.

Any policy that is developed should guide teachers, school administrators, students and parents/guardians on the appropriate use of information, including issues associated with copyright.

What is the role of the in-school administrator in relation to academic integrity and student responsibility?

The Education Act, 1995 assigns the in-school administrator the responsibility for defining and prescribing the standards of the school with regard to the duties of students. This can include establishing and communicating policies and procedures governing academic integrity and responsibilities. The general intention of the *Act* is that boards of education have primary responsibility for developing any rules regarding or with respect to how in-school administrators and teachers deal with plagiarism within the overarching expectations of the provincial curriculum and *The Education Act, 1995*.

Policy related to academic integrity and responsibilities may be included within a broader statement of student expectations at the school level. Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that teachers, students and parents/guardians understand the policy, including making the policy accessible in writing, and providing opportunities for verbal explanation and discussion among teachers and students.

What is the role of teachers in relation to academic integrity and student responsibility?

Teachers, supported by the in-school administrator, have a primary responsibility for communicating and applying the policy within the courses they are teaching. Teachers should apply their professional judgment within board policy, as they are in the best position to have an understanding of a student's individual abilities and personal circumstances.

The role of teachers related to academic integrity and student responsibility may include:

- introducing concepts of personal responsibility, honesty and integrity in an age-appropriate manner in keeping with curriculum expectations, teaching students accepted conventions for referencing the ideas of others in written work;
- clearly explaining expectations of students in relation to assignments, including how assignments will be evaluated, due dates and implications of submitting work after the due date;
- adapting assignments to suit individual abilities, circumstances and learning styles;
- working with colleagues to plan assignments so that there is a balanced workload for students throughout the semester, which helps students to meet their due dates for each course;
- following school division policy and administrative procedures related to academic integrity and student responsibilities;
- meeting with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss issues related to completion of work in a timely manner; and,
- working with staff, students and the school community council to develop a statement of student responsibilities and expectations.

What is the role of the School Community Council?

In keeping with their responsibilities set out in *The Education Act, 1995* and *The Education Regulations, 1986*, School Community Councils (SCCs) can play an important and helpful role in providing advice to the development of board policy related to academic integrity and student responsibilities.

SCCs will also play an important role in communicating with, and educating parents/guardians, about academic integrity and responsibilities in order to develop a shared responsibility to support the development of academic integrity and responsibility of students. Examples of SCCs' role may include: writing an article for the school newsletter based on how parents can

support their students in submitting assignments on time and avoiding plagiarism, or providing information at a school event.

What is the student's role and responsibility in relation to submitting work on time and avoiding plagiarism?

Students should assume responsibility for their own learning, including getting to school and class on time; attending school regularly; submitting work on time; and doing their best on tests and assignments. Therefore, students must take personal responsibility to be aware of the short- and long-term consequences of submitting plagiarized material and late assignments.

With regard to practical ways to avoid plagiarism when preparing assignments, using guidelines provided by the teacher, students should document their sources of information properly by using footnotes or other references, and place a bibliography or list of references at the end of the assignment to indicate the sources used.

What are some strategies teachers can employ to assist students in avoiding plagiarism and submitting late assignments?

By providing examples of plagiarism, teachers should inform students about the meaning and consequences of plagiarism. Teachers can create an open environment for discussion in the classroom, and respond to students' questions. As well, teachers can teach students how to conduct research, properly cite information sources, use quotations in their work and develop paraphrasing skills.

Teachers should clearly state their expectations and procedures for timeliness of assignments and explain exceptions and alternative arrangements for late assignments or missed work to both students and their parents/guardians. Within the framework of board policies and procedures, teachers may undertake the following actions for late and missing work:

- meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the reasons for non-completion;
- develop an agreement with the student to complete the assignment;
- arrange for the student to complete the work outside of school hours such as lunchtime or after school;
- provide peer support for the student;
- provide an alternative assignment to accommodate a diverse learning need;
- determine a mark that reflects the level of achievement demonstrated by the student on that particular assignment; and/or,
- note late assignments as part of extended reporting as a complement to the reported achievement related to the curriculum outcomes.

How does the philosophy of assessment expressed in Saskatchewan’s curriculum documents relate to consideration of academic integrity and student responsibility?

All assessment and evaluation of student achievement must be based on the outcomes in the provincial curriculum and the reporting of student achievement must be based on the achievement of curriculum outcomes. Assessment is not intended to be used as a disciplinary tool. As indicated above, there are a number of strategies teachers can use to support students in completing assignments on time and avoiding the use of plagiarism. If a student does not submit an assignment or plagiarizes the work of others, the teacher will have a difficult time assessing whether or not the student has achieved the learning objectives related to that assignment. If several assignments are missed, it will be difficult to assess whether or not the student has achieved the curriculum outcomes. School policy can also suggest that teachers consider late assignments as part of their extended student reporting and as a complement to the reported achievement related to the curriculum outcomes. For example, Saskatchewan’s Mathematics curriculum states “assessment information which is not related to outcomes can be gathered and reported (e.g., attendance, behaviour, general attitude, completion of homework, effort) to complement the reported achievement related to the outcomes”.

Specific curricula reference concepts of personal and social responsibility. For example, the 2011 English Language Arts 10, Curriculum Outcomes and Indicators A10 (Communicating with Purpose, Correctness, Unity, Coherence and Completeness CC10A.1) includes: “analyze and understand implications and consequences of plagiarism (i.e., ethical, legal, professional)” within outcomes related to social responsibility.

How can parents/guardians support their children to avoid plagiarism and complete assignments on time?

Parents/guardians can help their children to avoid the short- and long-term consequences of plagiarizing and submitting late assignments by:

- discussing examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior with their children;
- supporting their children to complete assignments by ensuring that school work is a priority, making time and space for school work, discussing due dates and expectations for assignments, and encouraging their student to develop a plan for completing the work on time;
- modeling respect for school policy and teacher guidelines regarding assignments;
- noticing and praising positive behaviours, such as finishing work on time and taking responsibility for one’s own work; and,
- offering helpful and constructive feedback to their children to assist them in developing personal responsibility for their school work.

What are the components of a board policy or administrative procedure that addresses plagiarism and student responsibility?

A board policy should ensure that the concepts of plagiarism, copyright and timeliness of assignments will be introduced in an age-appropriate way to all students, in all parts of the learning program. A policy should provide clear expectations related to academic integrity and student responsibility to students, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians and board members. Components can include:

- description of roles and responsibilities of students, teachers and administrators in relation to the policy;
- expectations of students to fulfill responsibilities within learning environments;
- expectations of students to avoid plagiarism;
- expectations for timeliness of assignments;
- clear articulation of procedures to follow with regard to exceptions to the stated expectations;
- clear articulation of the procedures that will be followed if students do not meet the expectations articulated in the policy;
- a statement that teachers use professional judgment within the parameters of the policy, taking into account factors such as age and maturity of the student, medical status and other personal circumstances, grade level and past behavior; and,
- procedures to ensure students and parents/guardians have a clear understanding of school expectations, exceptions, definitions and procedures.

Boards may wish to use the model policy in Appendix A to guide them in the development of policy or administrative procedures.

A MODEL BOARD POLICY: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Purpose The intent of this policy is to ensure that the concepts of academic integrity and student responsibility are introduced in an age-appropriate way to all students across the school division. The policy will:

- Provide clarity regarding expectations related to academic integrity and responsibilities to students, teachers, administrators, parents/guardians and board members; and,
- Support consistency in all grades and subject areas within the school division.

Authority *The Education Act, 1995*

Definitions

Academic Integrity
Evidence of one's own learning through demonstration of responsibility, honesty, trust and respect. Actions such as cheating; plagiarism; having others complete the work; buying papers from the internet or resubmission of previously submitted work indicate a lack of academic integrity.

Student Responsibility
Assuming responsibility for one's learning, including getting to school/class on time; attending regularly; submitting work on time; doing one's best on exams and assignments.

Plagiarism
The unacknowledged use of someone else's words, ideas or creations as one's own whether deliberate or accidental. The process of taking another person's work, ideas or words, and using them as if they were one's own.

Policy

- Students are expected to fulfill their responsibilities within the school's learning environments.
- Teachers and the in-school administrator will clearly articulate expectations of students with regard to plagiarism, timeliness and student responsibility.
- Expectations of students regarding timeliness of assignments and plagiarism will be communicated to students verbally and in writing (e.g., within "Classroom Expectations" or the "Course Syllabus").
- Teachers will review these expectations with students at the beginning of the school year or semester and as appropriate throughout the school year.

- Students are expected to take responsibility for their own work and avoid plagiarism.
- Students are expected to submit assignments on time.
- Teachers may use their professional discretion to provide students who have missed deadlines due to exceptional circumstances with alternative arrangements to complete assignments.
- When a student plagiarizes the whole or a portion of an assignment, or does not submit work on time, the teacher will use his/her professional judgment to determine an appropriate course of action, taking into account factors such as age and maturity of the student, medical status, other personal circumstances, grade level and past behaviour. Actions related to plagiarism may include the following:
 - creating an open environment for discussion in the classroom, and responding to students' questions about plagiarism; and,
 - teaching students how to conduct research, properly cite information sources, use quotations in their work and develop paraphrasing skills.

Actions related to late assignments may include the following:

- meeting with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for non-completion and developing a plan to complete the work;
- developing an agreement with the student to complete the assignment;
- completing the work outside of school hours such as lunchtime or after school;
- providing peer support for the student;
- providing an alternative assignment to accommodate a diverse learning need;
- determining a mark that reflects the level of achievement demonstrated by the student on that particular assignment; and/or,
- including late assignments as part of extended reporting as a complement to the reported achievement related to the curriculum outcomes.

Resources

The following resources were consulted in the preparation of this document.

Manitoba Education

This document outlines Manitoba Education's assessment policy and principles in the areas of academic responsibility, honesty, and promotion/retention of students. Beginning February 1, 2011, practices in Manitoba schools related to these areas will align with those described in this document. School divisions in Manitoba will formalize divisional policies to conform to this document by September 2011.

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/docs/policy_k12/assess_policyk12.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education

Beginning in September 2010, this document, in its forthcoming final edition, will outline a comprehensive policy for the assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement in Ontario schools, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf>

Various Saskatchewan school division and school websites.