

Principal Swanson's Statement on Academic Integrity

February 5, 2021 (*To be shared with students via video on: February 10, 2021*)

As we begin a new semester of this most unique school year and reflect on the lessons learned from our transition to hybrid learning, one of the many significant challenges we've faced is the mission to uphold academic integrity. I want to take a few minutes this morning to explore this issue and make a renewed call for loyalty to our school's core values, none of which are more important than honor and integrity.

The pandemic has caused us to develop new approaches to learning, but remote and hybrid classes have amplified ethical dilemmas that are anything but new: How do you behave when nobody's watching? If you see an opportunity to profit from doing something you know is wrong, do you do it, anyway? Will you cheat if you think you can get away with it? The opportunities to cheat appear more frequently now than they did in the past, but these questions have confronted students for as long as there have been schools. The way we answer them reveals essential truths about our character, if not always to others, then at least, to ourselves. And, ultimately, the way we think of *ourselves* is even more important than how we appear to others.

Education has been transformed in some pretty radical ways this year. In the face of those changes, the new threats to academic integrity have confounded schools everywhere (high schools, colleges and universities, alike) and our school is not immune to the problem. Because remote learning sometimes requires the delivery of assessments to students working from home, students now have to grapple with greater temptations than ever before. Since we're all human, and because any of us could make a poor decision and surrender to those temptations, it's perhaps inevitable that incidents of cheating here at Hingham High School have been more widespread over the past few months than at any time in recent memory. In fact, during the first semester of this school year, more than sixty Hingham High students faced disciplinary consequences for cheating on a school assignment.

According to school policy, cheating always results in a loss of credit, which means a zero on the assignment, and it may also lead to other disciplinary consequences. But, students, I want to emphasize that the goal of such policies is not to punish but to educate. Our school's highest purpose is to support you and provide a sturdy foundation for your future. Among the most important ways we can do that is by holding you accountable for your actions and by holding firm to the right set of values. Indeed, there are few things in life that matter more than honesty.

So as we begin the second semester, I am calling on all of you, as Hingham High School students, to *acknowledge* and to *honor* our school's expectations about academic integrity every time you take an assessment. To advance this goal, I am encouraging every Hingham High School teacher to include a statement about academic integrity on all assessments, whether delivered in person or remotely. Many of our teachers have already established this practice and, going forward, I hope you will find it practiced even more widely. You should also expect

that all violations of academic integrity will be reported to the assistant principals to ensure that school policies are implemented consistently.

Students: When you take a test, a quiz, or any kind of assessment, you'll likely be asked to pledge that you are submitting work that is only your own; that you did not give or receive help from others; and that you did not use any unauthorized apps or devices while completing the assessment. By taking that pledge and remaining true to it, you will be doing something of enormous value: You'll be committing yourselves to powerful and genuine learning; you'll be enhancing your college and career readiness; you'll be strengthening your relationships with your teachers; and, above all, you'll be affirming yourselves as people of honor and integrity. When this happens across our school, together we'll continue building the kind of community we all want.

Examples of statements to be included on assessments

1. *Type the following message: "I certify that this assignment is my own work. I will not receive help from another source".*
2. *The work on this exam is my own and I pledge not to use any outside sources or people to help me. I will not use a calculator on this exam. Using any outside sources is considered cheating and will result in a zero on the assessment. By selecting 'I agree', I pledge that I will not cheat."*
3. *Copy and sign: I agree I am not using any notes or other resources, and that I am not sharing or receiving any information about the quiz.*
4. *Copy the following statement on your paper (below your name) to indicate you are abiding by the HPS Academic Integrity Policy. "I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own. I pledge not to cheat. "*
5. *"I <your name> pledge to uphold the values of honesty, integrity, and respect that are expected of me as a student of the Hingham Public Schools. I will not receive or provide assistance from/to others on this assessment. I will follow all criteria as outlined by my teacher. All work is my own."*
6. *I certify that the answers on this quiz are mine. I did not text for help, or offer others help. I did not use the internet or any apps.*
7. *Type "I agree" if you agree with the following statement: I certify that this assignment is my own. I will not receive help from another source.*