

# Sussman Middle School

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## **Academic Honesty Policy**

2025-2026

### **Sussman Middle School Vision:**

At Sussman Middle School, 21st-century learners thrive as they prepare for their high school journey to become college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character.

### **Sussman Middle School Mission Statement:**

At Sussman Middle School, we provide a safe, engaging, and rigorous learning experience that empowers all students to reach their full potential. We develop learners of strong character who demonstrate integrity, resilience, and compassion. Through a curriculum that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, we nurture future leaders who contribute meaningfully as responsible and reflective citizens in our local community and the wider global context.

“Sussman Middle School is a Candidate School\* for the Middle Years Programme. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Sussman Middle School believes is important for our students.”

### **Alignment with Downey Unified School District (DUSD) Academic Integrity Policy**

As part of the Downey Unified School District (DUSD), Sussman Middle School aligns with the district’s Academic Integrity Policy, which promotes a culture of honesty, respect, and responsibility. DUSD expects all students to engage in ethical academic practices by upholding the values of integrity and honesty in all coursework, projects, and assessments.

### **Philosophy of Academic Honesty**

At Sussman Middle School, academic honesty is viewed as a foundation of ethical scholarship and the IB learner profile. We believe academic integrity serves three purposes:

- Promotes principled and reflective learners.
- Develops respect for intellectual property and original thought.
- Fosters independent, ethical learners who value integrity and responsibility.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is any behavior that results in, or may result in, a student gaining an unfair advantage in their work, whether deliberately or unintentionally. It includes both misrepresentation of one's own work and any action that undermines the integrity of the learning and assessment process.

It includes but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism – using another's work, ideas, or words without acknowledgment
- Collusion – allowing another student to copy or submit your work, or working together when individual work is required.
- Duplication of work – submitting the same work for multiple assignments or subjects.
- Falsification – fabricating data, sources, or results.
- Cheating during assessments – using unauthorized materials, electronic devices, or communicating with others.
- Impersonation – having another person complete an assignment or test.
- Unethical research behavior – ignoring safety, cultural sensitivity, or ethical protocols.
- Improper use of digital tools – using AI, translation software, or online resources in a way not permitted by the teacher.

## **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind that are legally and ethically recognized as belonging to an individual or group. In the MYP context, students are expected to respect and acknowledge:

- Copyrighted materials – books, articles, websites, images, videos, and music.
- Creative works – artwork, designs, performances, and compositions.
- Data and research – statistics, charts, graphs, experiments, and case studies.
- Ideas and concepts – theories, arguments, and innovations developed by others.

Acknowledgment is shown through proper referencing, citation, and crediting of all sources used.

## **Authentic Authorship**

Authentic authorship means that the work a student submits is their own original creation, reflecting their learning and skills. This includes:

- Producing original responses that demonstrate individual understanding.
- Giving credit to all sources of information, ideas, or inspiration.
- Distinguishing between collaborative work (where group effort is expected) and independent work (where individual effort is required).
- Using permitted resources appropriately (teachers, peers, technology, references).
- Maintaining academic integrity by avoiding shortcuts, copying, or misrepresentation

## **Consequences of Academic Dishonesty**

First Offense: Meeting with teacher and administrator, reflective assignment, and/or redo with reduced grade.

- Repeated Offenses: Escalated consequences, such as failing grade, formal parent meeting, loss of privileges, or suspension from extracurricular activities.

## **Supporting Academic Integrity in an AI-Driven World**

AI should be used to supplement student learning, not replace it. Misuse of AI—including for writing or math—is considered a violation of academic integrity. Teachers will guide students in responsible AI use and proper citation.

## **Research Sources and Proper Citation**

Students are expected to use school-approved sources such as Britannica School, GALE Databases, SORA, Alexandria Catalog, and Wonderopolis. Unverified sources like non-academic blogs or Wikipedia should be avoided. MLA citation format will be used consistently, supported by tools like EasyBib, NoodleTools, BibMe, and Purdue OWL.

## **MLA Conventions with Examples**

At Sussman Middle School, MLA style will be used across all eight subject areas. This ensures consistency, fairness, and clarity in how students acknowledge sources and present their work.

### **Books**

Works Cited entry:

Smith, John. *Learning in the MYP*. Oxford University Press, 2022.

### **Articles (Journal, Magazine, Website)**

Works Cited entry (journal):

Lopez, Maria. "Global Citizenship in the MYP." *Journal of International Education*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2021, pp. 210-225.

Works Cited entry (website):

Lopez, Maria. "Global Citizenship in the MYP." *International Education Review*, 15 Mar. 2021, [www.ierjournal.org/globalcitizenship](http://www.ierjournal.org/globalcitizenship).

### **Images / Artwork**

Works Cited entry:

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Starry Night*. 1889, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Works Cited entry:

"Academic Honesty in IB." *International Baccalaureate Organization*, 2020, [www.ibo.org/academic-honesty](http://www.ibo.org/academic-honesty).

### **Quoting vs. Paraphrasing**

- Direct quote:  
"Academic honesty is essential for authentic learning" (IBO 4).
- Paraphrase: The IB emphasizes that learning is only genuine when it is based on honesty (IBO 4).

### **Formatting Conventions in MLA**

- Double spacing throughout.
- Times New Roman, 12-pt font.
- Page numbers in the top right with last name (e.g., *Smith 1*).
- Title centered (no bold or underline).
- Works Cited page on a new page, alphabetized by author's last name, with hanging indents.

### **Student Responsibilities in Academic Honesty**

- Demonstrate academic integrity in all work.
- Refuse to engage in or tolerate dishonesty.
- Acknowledge sources when using others' ideas or words.
- Prepare adequately for assessments.
- Seek help when needed and reflect on learning.
- Avoid cheating, plagiarism, lying, and misuse of technology (including AI for writing or math).
- Sign an Academic Integrity Statement on summative assessments.

### **Teacher Responsibilities in Academic Honesty**

- Model ethical practices and provide clear expectations.
- Teach responsible research, citation, and AI use.
- Clarify acceptable collaboration vs. independent work.
- Address violations with students and use discretion for minor first offenses.
- Report repeated/significant violations to administration.
- Contact parents/guardians when violations occur.

### **Parent Responsibilities in Academic Honesty**

- Review and discuss the policy with their child.
- Encourage integrity, honesty, and responsibility.

- Support faculty and administration in enforcing the policy.

### **Administrator Responsibilities in Academic Honesty**

- Distribute the Academic Honesty Policy to all stakeholders.
- Foster a school-wide culture of academic integrity.
- Keep records of policy violations.
- Ensure consistent application across the school.

### **Librarian Responsibilities in Academic Honesty**

- Support students and teachers in defining academic honesty and identifying reliable sources.
- Provide guidance on ethical research and technology use, including AI.
- Help students build research skills and responsible information practices.

### **IB Learner Profile Connection**

Practicing academic honesty supports students in being principled, reflective, and knowledgeable. These values help students navigate a complex, technology-rich world with integrity and responsibility.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Sussman administration and MYP staff to ensure relevance and accountability.

Reviewed and Approved by the Sussman Middle School MYP Academic Honesty Policy Committee

Date of Review: August 2025, June 2025