

HONOR CODE OF THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

“Never suppose that in any possible situation or under any circumstance it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing however slightly so it may appear to you. . . . Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise them whenever an opportunity arises, being assured that they will gain strength by exercise . . . and that exercise will make them habitual . . . Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of [any difficult situation] in the easiest manner possible.”

-- Thomas Jefferson

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE & PLEDGE

The purpose of the Honor Code of the Maggie L. Walker Governor’s School for Government and International Studies (the “School”) is to promote, protect, and sustain a community of trust, so that students can enjoy the freedom to develop their intellectual and personal growth. By agreeing to the Honor Code, students commit themselves to the pursuit of truth. Dishonest means are incompatible with this pursuit. Toward that end, all students who have committed to this pursuit agree that they shall not lie, cheat, steal, or commit plagiarism or acts that constitute forgery.

The following pledge must be written at the end of all examinations and on assignments at the request of the teacher:

*On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this work
[assignment, project, quiz, test, examination, etc.].*

Teachers may insist that the statement be written on all academic work and may refuse to extend credit for work on which it does not appear.

ARTICLE II: RESPONSIBILITIES

A. STUDENTS have the responsibility to:

1. Avoid lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, and committing acts that constitute forgery, or situations that might contribute to lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, and committing acts that constitute forgery.
2. Avoid unauthorized assistance on all academic work.
3. Report violations of the Honor Code. If a student witnesses or realizes that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred, the student must report the offense to a teacher or an administrator. Failure to report a violation to a teacher or an administrator shall constitute a violation of the Honor Code.
4. Sign the Honor Pledge on every exam, test, quiz, and/or assignment as requested by the teacher.

B. TEACHERS have the responsibility to:

1. Teach or review the correct use of sources when assigning work.
2. Design and maintain a classroom atmosphere and culture that will reduce the possibility of cheating.
3. Specify the types of collaboration that are prohibited and those that are permitted.
4. State at the beginning of each course and assignment any relevant information as it relates to the Honor Code.
5. Take immediate action when violations are noticed or reported by:
 - a. Questioning the student under suspicion; and
 - b. Referring the case to an administrator.

C. ADMINISTRATORS have the responsibility to:

1. Encourage teachers to strictly enforce the Honor Code.
2. Maintain accurate records of reported violations of the Honor Code.
3. Create a school-wide environment that encourages adherence to the Honor Code.
4. Assure that all teachers, school staff members, students, and parents have knowledge of the Honor Code.
5. Maintain records of all Honor Code violations and provide help in arranging all necessary conferences and hearings.

D. PARENTS have the responsibility to:

1. Read and be familiar with the Honor Code and the consequences for a violation of the Honor Code.
2. Encourage students to adhere to the Honor Code.
3. Support teachers, school staff members, and administration in enforcing the Honor Code.

ARTICLE III: DEFINITIONS OF SPECIFIC OFFENSES**A. CHEATING** includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage over other students in academic work or other school-related activities.
2. Fraud, duress, deception, theft, trickery, talking, signs, gestures, copying from another student, and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, computers, data, online sources, or other information, in connection with academic work or other school-related activities.
3. Attempted cheating.

B. PLAGIARISM includes, but is not limited, the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the words, work, creative art, or opinions of someone else, without the proper acknowledgement.
2. The borrowing of the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

3. Failure to document with quotation marks any material copied directly from other sources.
- C. LYING means knowing and willful telling of an untruth or falsehood, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deception, or fraud in an oral or written statement. This includes, but is not limited to:
1. Lying to administrators, teachers, and school staff members.
 2. Lying to a member or representative of the Honor Council concerning an Honor Code violation or alleged violation.
 3. Falsifying any school documentation by mutilation, addition, deletion, or other means.
- D. FORGERY means the falsification of a signature, and includes, but is not limited to a teacher's, administrator's, parent's, or student's signature.

ARTICLE IV: CHARGING AND INVESTIGATION

- A. A complaint regarding a suspected Honor Code violation can be submitted by a student, teacher, or administrator. All complaints must be submitted in writing to the Director of the School or his or her designee (hereinafter the "Director"), either directly or through a teacher.
- B. The Director shall notify the accused that a complaint has been filed against him or her. Cases that may bring the potential for litigation, recommendation for expulsion, return to home school districts, or out-of-school suspension shall not be heard by the honor council.
- C. In cases that may not bring the aforementioned potential consequences, upon receiving notice of the complaint, the accused may request that the case, including the hearing if necessary, either proceed before (1) the Director or (2) the Student Honor Council.
1. Before the case can proceed before the Student Honor Council, the parents or guardians of the accused must grant permission and must also sign a General Release and Exchange of Confidential Educational Records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and its implementing regulations, at 34 C.F.R. Part 99.
 - i. The only information that will be made available to the student honor council is that which pertains to the evidence and circumstances of the alleged infraction. This includes prior confirmed infractions.
 2. A first time referral to the honor council shall not become part of the student's school disciplinary record.
 3. Without the consent of the parents or guardians and a signed release, the case shall be before the Director.
- D. In cases where there is insufficient allegations to support a violation of the Honor Code, the Director or the Student Honor Council (if elected by the accused, with parental consent) shall have the authority to dismiss the complaint.
- E. In cases where there is sufficient allegations to support a violation of the Honor Code, the Director or the Student Honor Council (if elected by the accused, with parental consent) shall give the accused an opportunity to plead the following:

1. “guilty” or “no contest”;
 2. “innocent”; or
 3. “guilty,” but requests a hearing.
- F. If the accused pleads guilty or no contest, the accused forfeits his or her right to a hearing and shall sign the honor violation referral form, admitting to the alleged violation of the Honor Code. The Director will determine an appropriate consequence. In cases where the accused (with parental consent) chooses for the case to proceed before the Student Honor Council and pleads guilty or no contest, then the Student Honor Council may recommend an appropriate consequence for the Director’s consideration.
- G. In the case the accused pleads innocent or guilty but with the request of a hearing, the case will proceed to a hearing.

ARTICLE V: HEARING PROCEDURES

- A. If the accused chooses to move forward with a hearing, the hearing will be held by the Director or the Student Honor Council (if elected by the student, with parental consent):
1. The hearing before the Director shall be private and the Director shall have full discretion over the conduct of the hearing. The accused may make an opening statement, may present all material and relevant evidence, including the testimony of witnesses, and may cross examine witnesses. Witnesses may be questioned by the Director.
 2. The hearing before the Student Honor Council will be conducted in the following format:
 - a. At the accused’s option, he or she may select another student to act as his or her representative during the hearing. The individual asked to be a student-representative has the right to refuse the request.
 - b. All parties participating in the hearing shall be given at least two days’ notice of the date and time of the hearing.
 - c. The Student Honor Council will begin the hearing with a brief introduction, setting forth the allegations and stressing the confidentiality and seriousness of the hearing.
 - d. Opening statements.
 - e. Testimony of witness(es).
 - f. After witness testimony, the Student Honor Council will engage in an open discussion, during which it may ask additional questions of the witnesses.
 - g. Closing statements.
 - h. The Student Honor Council will consider the evidence and reach a verdict in a closed deliberation. A two-thirds majority of the Student Honor Council is required to find that the accused has committed a violation of the Honor Code.
 - i. After its deliberation, the Student Honor Council will announce its decision and recommend a consequence, if any, in accordance with Article IX.
 - j. The Student Honor Council shall forward its decision and the recommended consequence, if any, to the Director for review. The

Director shall take into consideration the Student Honor Council's recommendation when making the final decision, but the Director shall have the ultimate decision whether to uphold, modify, or reject the Student Honor Council's recommendation.

ARTICLE VI: RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED

- A. Every student accused of an Honor Code violation has the right:
 - 1. To be advised in writing of the nature of the charge;
 - 2. To have all proceedings against him or her held privately;
 - 3. To cross-examine witnesses against him or her;
 - 4. To present evidence and witnesses in his or her own defense;
 - 5. To be heard in his or her own defense;
 - 6. To refuse to testify against himself or herself; and
 - 7. To be represented by a student representative during the hearing before the Student Honor Council.

- B. No student shall be found to have committed an Honor Code violation unless a preponderance of the evidence supports that the student committed a violation of the Honor Code.

- C. Every student found to have committed an Honor Code violation shall have access, subject to supervision by an administrator, to the record of the proceedings against him or her and may request a review of the decision on the basis of new evidence (not available to him or her at the time of the original hearing) that potentially may impact the outcome of the case. Such a review must be requested within two weeks of the final decision. The Director shall be responsible for conducting a review of the new evidence and will determine, at the Director's discretion, whether to reverse, modify, or uphold the original decision.

- D. The accused may communicate to the Director any questions or criticism concerning the handling of his or her case.

ARTICLE VII: RECORDS

- A. All records of the Student Honor Council shall be kept by the Director in a secured location.

- B. Each case shall be marked with a case number, using the following format: 1-2016-2017 (for the first hearing of the 2016-2017 school year). If several hearings are required for several persons involved in one case, then the format shall be as follows: 1A-2016-2017 (person A of the first hearing of the 2016-2017 school year).

- C. The Secretary of the Student Honor Council is responsible for taking the minutes of the hearing and the Student Honor Council's meetings. The Secretary shall have three full nights to transcribe the unaltered notes into typed/written format and present it to the

Director. The unaltered notes must also be returned to the Director. If the Secretary does not, after three full nights, present the records to the Director, the Secretary must hand them over as soon as possible, and will be dismissed from his or her position on the Student Honor Council, unless the Secretary can provide a justifiable reason to the Student Honor Council about the delay.

- D. A student's first offense for violation of the Honor Code heard by the Honor Council or administration will not become part of the student's school discipline record. Any subsequent violation of the Honor Code heard by the Honor Council or administration will become part of the student's school discipline record.

ARTICLE VIII: STUDENT HONOR COUNCIL ELECTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Student Honor Council members shall elect a Chairman and Secretary, and the Director shall appoint the Sponsor.
1. The Chairman will be chosen from the Student Honor Council members in the second full meeting after elections. In order to be elected Chairman, the Student Honor Council member must have at least one-year prior service through election by the Student Honor Council. The Chairman presides over the Student Honor Council during meetings and hearings.
 2. The Secretary will be chosen from the Student Honor Council in the second full meeting after elections. The Secretary is responsible for the minutes, records, and files of the Student Honor Council, and to ensure that all records are transmitted to the Director.
 3. The Director shall be responsible for selecting the Sponsor of the Student Honor Council. The Sponsor must be someone, who in the Director's sole discretion, possesses the necessary skills and qualifications for the position.
- B. All members of the Student Honor Council shall strictly maintain confidentiality of all records involving any matters before the Student Honor Council. Any violation of confidentiality shall be treated as a violation of the Honor Code.

ARTICLE IX: RANGE OF CONSEQUENCES

- A. The consequences for a violation of the Honor Code shall be determined by the Director under the particular circumstances of the case. Consequences may include but are not limited to:
1. Consequences may range from parent contact to recommendation for expulsion (see Article IVB).
- B. In addition to recommending an appropriate consequence to the Director, pursuant to the student referendum of 2010, the Student Honor Council may also recommend either a delay in admission of or the removal of an existing member from the Honor Society. In making this recommendation, the Student Honor Council will take into consideration the grade level, severity of the offense, and past record, using the following guidelines:

1. If the student committed an honor violation during freshman or sophomore year, the student will be barred from applying for the Honor Society membership until senior year.
 2. If the student committed an honor violation during his or her junior or senior year, then the student will not be able to apply for membership and, if already a member, his or her membership will be revoked.
 3. Students' disciplinary records will be shared with book award, senior award, and scholarship committee chairs.
- C. Additionally, pursuant to the student referendum of 2010, a violation of the Honor Code will automatically disqualify a student from holding either SCA or class officer for the remainder of the student's enrollment at the School.

Adopted: December 15, 2016

Amended: April 19, 2017

Amended: January 16, 2020
