
Sutherland High School Agreement for Academic Honesty

Pittsford Sutherland High School takes personal and academic integrity very seriously. Accordingly, we want you to understand that taking part in cheating in any way is a violation of Sutherland High School's expectations regarding academic honesty. Put simply, cheating is when you submit work that is not your own or allow another to submit your work as if it were his or her own. In the case of assignments designed for pair or group completion, you are responsible for completing your own part of the task. Anything you put your name to must represent work that you have actually completed. If you are ever unsure about how to properly give credit to another or take credit for yourself, you are responsible for seeking clarification from your teacher; just like with legal matters, ignorance of the law does not constitute exemption from the law or the penalties that result from breaking it. By the time one reaches high school, we fully expect that he or she understands what cheating is. Because plagiarism, which is a serious form of cheating, can be more confusing, it is important that you read the excerpt below. In cases of uncertainty, it is **your** responsibility to seek help from the MLA Handbook or an English teacher. Remember, you can be penalized even for unintentional plagiarism, which is why it is so important to know what it is and how to avoid it.

When in Doubt, Cite Your Source(s)!

Obviously, you know that you must document your source when you quote something word for word. You must also document your source when you paraphrase or summarize another person's work. *Paraphrasing* involves restating information (written or spoken) in your own words. You must reword all of the material, *not just change a few words*. The idea(s) still belong to someone else, so you must give him or her credit, even though you rewrote the information. *Summarizing* is usually much briefer than paraphrasing. When you summarize, you emphasize and rewrite the main point(s) of the source.

With paraphrasing and summarizing, you must clearly identify the work of others in order to acknowledge their contributions and clarify what your own thoughts and contributions are.

The following review points are from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. {Plagiarism is covered extensively in Section 2.}

To review:

You have plagiarized if:

- you took notes that did not distinguish summary and paraphrase from quotation and then you presented wording from the notes as if it were all your own.
- while browsing the Web, you copied text and pasted it into your paper without quotation marks or without citing the source.
- you presented facts without saying where you found them.
- you repeated or paraphrased someone's wording without acknowledgment.
- you took someone's unique or particularly apt phrase without acknowledgment.
- you paraphrased someone's argument or presented someone's line of thought without acknowledgment.
- you bought or otherwise acquired a research paper and handed in part or all of it as your own.

You can avoid plagiarism by:

- making a list of the writers and viewpoints you discovered in your research and using this list to double-check the presentation of material in your paper.
- keeping the following three categories distinct in your notes: your ideas, your summaries of others' material, and exact wording you copy.
- identifying the sources of all material you borrow – exact wording, paraphrases, ideas, arguments, and facts.
- checking with your instructor when you are uncertain about your use of sources.

For the Student

I have carefully read this agreement and understand that cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses at Sutherland High School. I understand that by signing below, I am stating that I understand what plagiarism is and acknowledge that it is a form of cheating. I further understand that if ever confused about how to properly make sure that I am not cheating or plagiarizing, it is **my responsibility** to consult my teacher for clarification. I understand that the penalty for cheating and plagiarism at Pittsford Sutherland High School includes a zero on the assignment and possible disqualification from being a candidate for or a member of the National Honor Society.

Student signature_____

Date_____

A Note to Parents/Guardians

A child's moral development is an essential component of general education. At Sutherland High School we believe that mastery of subject matter is subordinate to good moral character. We also believe that this philosophy is consistent with the expectations of the world that awaits your child upon graduation, whether it be in college, the workplace, the military, etc. For that reason, we ask for your partnership in making academic honesty and integrity an important part of your conversations with him or her. We know that even good kids will make mistakes and errors in judgment, but by making expectations and consequences clear, and holding firmly to them, together we can help to assure that our young people will develop the kind of ethics that help create a foundation for strong families and communities. This partnership begins with your conversation with your child about this document and signing it.

Parent/Guardian signature_____

Date_____

Parent/Guardian signature_____
(second parent/guardian signature optional)

Date_____

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS.