Policy on Plagiarism and Intellectual Theft

Guidelines and Procedures for the ethical use of information at Xavier College
Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set standards of acceptable behaviour by students of Xavier College, with regard to ethical use of information and the intellectual rights of authors, that are consistent with the broader values and expectations of the College.

Rationale

Xavier College is committed to the achievement of academic excellence and the engendering of social and ethical responsibility in our students. Part of this process is recognising the intellectual property rights of others and accepting that the act of plagiarism is academic dishonesty as well as an ethical offence. A student who plagiarises is dishonest with their teachers, their peers and themselves.

The College has adopted the Harvard Referencing style.

Definition

‘Plagiarism’ is a synonym for cheating and is the act of taking and using the thoughts, writings, inventions, creations or oral presentations of another person as one's own. The word ‘plagiarise’ stems from the Latin ‘plagiarius’, meaning ‘kidnapper’ - one who steals something and demands a ransom. So, a plagiarist is someone who steals something and wants credit for it.

‘Intellectual theft’ is a euphemism for cheating — the act of stealing someone else’s work and claiming ownership. Intellectual theft is a serious crime and forms the basis of much expensive litigation. Both Xavier College and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) maintain that students will be penalised for plagiarism, which is a serious breach of rules.

Plagiarism can take a number of forms, such as:

- Copying: exactly reproducing another's words.
- Paraphrasing: expressing the meaning of another's words in different words.
- Summarising: reproducing the main points of another's argument.
- Cobbling: copying, paraphrasing or summarising the work of a number of different people and piecing them together to produce one body of text.

None of these practices is wrong in itself, but use of one or more, without acknowledgement, constitutes plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Therefore, all sources must be adequately and accurately acknowledged.

Plagiarism also includes the preparation or production and submission or presentation of assignments or other work in conjunction with another person or other people when that work should be your own independent work.

Plagiarism is not limited to words and ideas. It also includes materials such as video and audio recordings, art and graphics, photographs, maps, diagrams, graphs and tables, computer programs or codes, research, and so on. This material can come from published sources, including books, journals, websites, films, newspapers and journals as well as unpublished sources such as lecture and tutorial notes and work by students.

Unless it is considered ‘Common Knowledge’, all material that you use in your work that comes from someone else must be acknowledged.
Examples of Plagiarism
You are plagiarising when you do any of the following, even if unintentionally:

- You hand in someone else’s work - their intellectual property - as your own.
- You copy another student’s work (with or without their knowledge) and hand it in as your own.
- You produce assignments in conjunction with other people (e.g. another student, tutor) which is supposed to be your own independent work.
- You allow someone else to copy your work and hand it in.
- You paraphrase material from another source without proper acknowledgement or citation.
- You piece together different sections of the work of others into a new whole ie 'cutting and pasting', especially off the internet or CD-ROM encyclopedias etc.
- You fail to indicate with quotation marks that you copied another person’s exact written words or symbols, regardless of how few were used.
- You buy or obtain a paper from an internet research service or ‘paper mill’ and hand it in as your original work.
- Copy verbatim (exactly) material from another source without putting it in quotation marks and acknowledging the source with a reference.
- Fail to provide a correct reference list with your assignment.
- Fail to name a person you quote when presenting an oral report.

Consequences of breach of this policy

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of personal honesty and integrity in their work. Submissions to teachers must be original, or respect the intellectual contributions of others through correct referencing.

Any violations of this policy will have serious consequences.

If a teacher reasonably believes, based on significant evidence, that a student has been guilty of plagiarism or assisted another student to do so, then that student may be subject to any of the following penalties, depending on the nature and extent of the plagiarism:

- Verbal warning.
- Plagiarised sections eliminated / ignored and assignment marked on what remains.
- Criteria to be applied to those sections of the work that are the student’s original work or that are referenced correctly.
- Student rewrites the assignment in one or a series of detentions (determined by Head of House and class teacher), using original ideas or style.
- Reduction of marks for the assignment.
- No marks at all given for the assignment.
- Referral and consultation with Head of House.
- Contact made with parent / guardian via phone or written correspondence. Possible parent interview with Head of House, subject teacher and student.
- Referral to Administration – Director of Teaching and Learning and Principal - for additional discipline.

A teacher can refuse to accept any part of the work if the infringement is judged as a serious authentication issue and
- N will be awarded for the outcome
- NA will be submitted for the School-Assessed Coursework or School-Assessed Task.
Teachers are asked to report to the appropriate House Head when a severe breach of rules is apparent. The House Head, or in serious cases, the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Principal, shall determine which of the above penalties shall be imposed. This may result in a change of the original outcome result from S to N.

At VCE level, if N is awarded for an outcome, then, as a consequence, N will be awarded for the unit concerned. Similarly, the detected breach of rules may result in a score change for the task. In the case of VCE units, this score change is to be communicated to the VCAA.

Please note that the penalties for tertiary plagiarism are even more severe, and may include exclusion from a subject or course, even if fees have been paid.

Reference List


