

Plagiarism Information for Parents

What is plagiarism?

As a school, one of our core values is integrity. We expect that all HCOS students act with integrity and make every effort to present original work when submitting assignments, citing outside research to give credit to other authors when appropriate. Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) occurs when a student takes credit for work that is not their own.

The [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#) (2022) defines plagiarism as:

“to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own; to use another's production without crediting the source.

Credit, in the form of a citation, must be given for any content in an assignment that is not original. It is important for students to develop healthy habits of academic integrity when researching, creating, and sharing their work. As we study and learn in an increasingly digital world, it is important to give credit for both written and visual sources.

What does the Bible say about plagiarism?

The following excerpt from [Got Questions Ministries](#) (2022) outlines plagiarism from a Biblical perspective:

“Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else’s work or ideas and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism is most commonly associated with written work, such as research papers or books, but it can also occur with artistic expressions or in spoken work, such as a speech. While it is true that imitation is the highest form of flattery, such imitation is only flattering when proper credit is given to the original. When proper credit or permission is not given, imitation becomes plagiarism.

Plagiarism is **dishonest** because it advances a falsehood, passing off as one’s own the work of another, and the Bible has much to say about lying (e.g., [Exodus 20:16](#); [Proverbs 6:17](#)). Plagiarism is also self-seeking, since the plagiarizer attempts to promote himself through the stolen work, and the Bible

condemns self-seeking (see [Romans 2:8](#); [Philippians 2:3](#); [2 Timothy 3:2](#)). Plagiarism is also stealing, and the Bible has much to say about the evils of [stealing](#) (e.g., [Exodus 20:15](#)). To steal is to take something that belongs to another, without permission, and make it one's own. It's easy to see how taking someone's physical property is wrong. But taking someone's intellectual property is just as wrong. Ideas, creative work, and written expressions belong to the person who created them. Plagiarism takes from the creator what was produced from his or her own mind and heart. Plagiarism robs authors, artists, musicians, and other creators of their right to profit from their own original work. It also robs them of the right to build a reputation based upon their work.

Stealing is a sin that was part of our old lives, not to be continued after we meet Jesus ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). [Ephesians 4:28](#) says that stealing must be replaced with something good: "Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need." This principle applies to the theft of intellectual property as well. If plagiarism has been a part of someone's old life, it must be renounced and confessed to the Lord as sin (see [1 John 1:9](#)). In order to live in honesty and integrity, we must give proper credit to people whose work we admire, and we should request permission before using the work of others as part of our own creations. Plagiarism has no part in the life of a follower of Christ ([1 Peter 4:15](#)).

How can I equip my child with tools to avoid plagiarism?

Plagiarism can be discussed with children as young as preschool using age appropriate language and examples. Review Learning Commons resources for [Grades K-5 Research Skills](#) and [Grades 6-9 Research Skills](#) to integrate research skill building with other curricular areas.

If you come across plagiarism in your child's work, please reach out to your support teacher or subject-specific teacher (e.g., online, CC+) to inform them and utilize their support in helping your child to not plagiarize.

As your child enters the middle school grades, review the [HCOS Academic Integrity Policy](#) with them so they clearly understand what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and consequences for submitting plagiarized work at the middle school and grad levels. You can also sign up for Grammarly for Students by following the instructions on [this SOPHIE page](#).

Additional resources are available at the following links:

- [Subscriptions Tools for Teaching Students How to Do Research](#)
- [Citing Digital Images](#)
- [Did I Plagiarize? The Types and Severity of Plagiarism Violations](#) (Newbold, 2014)
- [Can I Use That Picture?](#) (Newbold, 2014)

References

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[plagiarize-the-types-and-severity-of-plagiarism-violations/](https://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/2014/09/16/did-i-plagiarize-the-types-and-severity-of-plagiarism-violations/)

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