



## Academic Honesty

Lake Castle Private School offers an accelerated academic curriculum to its students, of course; however, a fundamental philosophy begun by Clendon Butera was total development of a student. Thus, in addition to academics, we have always aspired to instill excellent habits, manners, and character in our boys and girls. To that end, Lake Castle has no tolerance for academic dishonesty.

What is considered academic dishonesty? Certainly, copying answers from another student, giving answers to another student, telling another student an answer, or using any unauthorized notes or resources constitutes the most flagrant instances of academic dishonesty. In addition to these age-old methods, the digital age has introduced less obvious yet equally inappropriate methods of presenting work that is not the student's. These include plagiarizing the work of others and, more recently, using artificial intelligence (AI) to obtain work or answers in any academic subject.

Although no student finds a published essay or article written by someone else and then puts his or her name on it for submission without knowing that is cheating, the availability of AI via software such as Chat GPT makes the idea of submitting work that is "no one's" complicates the situation for children. They can fool themselves into thinking that they did not take someone else's work.

The fact of the matter is that using AI is still plagiarism. Chat GPT does not know anything; it merely collects all of the published work on a topic and then essentially scrambles it to regurgitate it in a newly organized composition. When a writer uses the words or ideas of a published piece of writing without giving credit to the original writer, that is plagiarism, and that is, unequivocally, academic dishonesty.

Any student engaging in any form of academic dishonesty will receive a 0 on the graded assignment, test, essay, or project without opportunity to change that grade. The student will redo the assignment for completion and understanding but not for a new grade. This is a very serious consequence, but academic dishonesty is a very serious offense.

Please monitor students at home when they have a written assignment, essay, or project and speak to them about the importance of always presenting **their** best work only. Utilizing resources such as Chat GPT can be extremely tempting for students, and the debate of use of AI in school or in the workplace will surely continue; however, there is no place for it in elementary and middle school. It is vital that students of this age master the fundamentals of reading, mathematics, grammar, writing, and thinking critically so that they can function independently in a complex world. At some later point, the access to AI could then become a supplemental tool and not a crutch on which they would depend.

Finally, we want students to learn material and have confidence in their own knowledge to know that they do not have to resort to cheating. Their character matters more than their grade, and if they take on their academic responsibilities with effort and honor, the grades will take care of themselves.