

Code of Conduct FAQ

How Did the New Code of Conduct Come About?

The Code of Conduct, which has a revised discipline and an honor policy, was created to provide a common foundation for all students to express and uphold their commitment to academic honesty, self-betterment, and personal integrity. This was part of a natural evolution of the discipline policy we have in place, but this will enhance the connectivity between students, teachers, and parents in understanding CA's conduct expectations. To help prepare CA students for college and beyond, we want to teach students to properly navigate all the diverse resources at their disposal and reiterate our dedication to academic honesty and integrity.

Why Is There So Much Discussion of Honor and Integrity at Clarksville Academy?

Research shows overwhelmingly that in schools where honor and academic integrity are part of a school's daily dialogue, far fewer incidents of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonest behavior occur. This system is meant to create a stronger community wherein teachers, administrators, students, and parents all have a clear understanding of the school's academic and behavioral expectations and what the consequences will be if those rules are broken.

Where Can I Find It?

You can find the Code of Conduct on the Clarksville Academy website. It is also being distributed to each Upper School student and his or her family.

What is Different About the Code of Conduct from Previous Years?

We will now have two codes under the Code of Conduct: **Honor and Discipline**. Here are general facts about both codes:

I. Honor Code

Each Upper School student will pledge and sign his or her name to the Honor Code at the beginning of the year. This is the pledge:

*In pursuit of the high moral ideals and academic standards at Clarksville Academy, I commit myself to respect and to uphold the school's Honor System:
To be honest in every academic endeavor, and
To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Clarksville Academy community as we live and work together.*

What Constitutes an Honor Violation?

Cheating, plagiarism, and any kind of academic dishonesty are honor violations and will likely result in a hearing with the Honor Council.

What happens when a student violates the Honor Code?

Teachers will talk with the student about the violation outside of class, submit a report to the CA administration, and print a Student Rights sheet for the student and parent to sign. This should be returned within two school days of the alleged violation.

The Student Right's sheet asks the student to state how he/she will approach the hearing. They have three options:

- a. *Signing "A" means you admit to the alleged violation, will accept the penalty imposed, but decline your opportunity to appear before the Honor Council. (submitting a written statement is STRONGLY recommended)*
- b. *Signing "B" means you admit to the alleged violation, and you will appear before the Honor Council to discuss your case (submitting a written statement & appearing is STRONGLY recommended).*
- c. *Signing "C" means you do NOT admit to the alleged violation, and you wish to appear before the Honor Council with a written statement to discuss your case (appearing & submitting a written statement to the Honor Council is REQUIRED if you are denying the allegation).*

A parent's signature indicates that the parent and student have discussed the alleged violations of the Honor Code. It does not imply agreement or disagreement with the allegation(s). The Honor Council only makes disciplinary recommendations to the Head of School. The final arbiter of guilt or consequences is the Head of School.

Who Serves On the Honor Council?

The Council is made up of 7 members appointed by the Head of School. There will be three seniors carefully selected each year based on admissions criteria. Four faculty members will also be selected by the Head of School to serve on the council. Head of School serves as counsel and makes final decisions regarding Honor Council hearings.

Research shows that Honor Councils involving students are much more effective. When students feel they have a stake in the process, they are more willing to listen and work with that system.

Do Parents Participate in Council meetings?

Council meetings are for the Honor System and the student's learning experience. Parents' voices and participation would be acceptable through communication with the Head of School. Should the student desire to have an adult present with them at the hearing, they may ask any member of the faculty or staff who they interact with on the campus to be present.

When Does the Honor Council Meet?

Hearings are in response to referrals made from the teacher. It is the responsibility of the Honor Council Faculty Sponsor to set a date in a timely manner. Whenever a teacher reports a violation, we will likely have a hearing.

What Happens at the Honor Council Hearings?

The Honor Council affirms a confidentiality pledge and then reads statements from the teacher/student regarding the case to determine the best possible recommendations to make to Head of School for dealing with an Honor Code violation. Students can be found not guilty, guilty without premeditation, guilty with premeditation, or the case may be declared indeterminate.

What About Confidentiality?

All Honor Council findings, reports, and recommendations are held in the strictest of confidence. Maintaining confidentiality for a student going through the Honor System is of paramount concern.

Honor Council Members and all individuals involved in cases are forbidden to discuss Honor cases outside of what is required by their obligations. A Council member who violates this bond of trust will be removed from the Council and will be found in violation of the Honor Code.

Only if they choose, will student offenders be identified to the Honor Council. Such a de-identified format means that their name and all other identifying information will be withheld by the administration. However, it is also true that taking ownership of one's mistake, and appearing at the hearing, may make a difference in how the Council views the case and consequences. It is the student's choice whether to appear or not.

What if there is a conflict of interest between someone serving on the Honor Council and the student sitting before the Council?

If any faculty or student member of the Honor Council has a real or perceived conflict of interest in a particular hearing, that person is expected to recuse him/herself and an alternate will take his/her place on the Council.

Does the Honor Council Determine Consequences?

No. Head of School assigns the consequences based on the Honor Council's recommendations. She can modify, adopt, or reject the recommendations. First-time offenders might receive consequences that include several hours of Saturday School, a writing assignment, an apology letter, among other things. If the violation is more serious or repetitive, more stringent consequences will be considered.

Are there other independent college preparatory schools and colleges and universities that have Honor Codes? Yes. The following are just some of the preparatory schools and colleges and universities that do: Montgomery Bell Academy, Harpeth Hall, Davidson Academy, McCallie High School, Baylor School, Pace Academy, The Webb School, Rhodes College, University of the South, The Citadel, Virginia Military Institute, University of Virginia, Duke University, West Point, Guilford College, Emory University, Georgetown University, William & Mary, Dartmouth College, Davidson College, Johns Hopkins University, Princeton University, and Stanford University.

This Sounds Nice, But Does it Really Work?

Yes. One student at a time.

At the end of this document there are talking points that statistically show why implementing an Honor Code at Clarksville Academy is important.

II. Discipline Code

Each Upper School student is expected to respect and abide by the Code of Conduct, which states:

Scholarship: A CA student actively seeks knowledge and understanding, and encourages that pursuit among classmates.

Truth and Honor: A CA student tells the truth, does one's own work, honors one's commitments, and respects the property of others and of the school.

Accountability: A CA student accepts responsibility for one's own education, decisions, and actions.

Respect: A CA student acts in a kind and respectful way that best represents one's school, parents, and community and self to promote a safe, healthy environment in which to learn.

Involvement: A CA student develops leadership, cooperation, communication, self-discipline, and friendships in activities within and outside of the classroom.

Diversity: A CA student respects cultural diversity, individuality, and the choices and rights of others.

How is the Discipline Code different from the Honor Code?

The Honor Code and Council deal only with issues of academic dishonesty: cheating, plagiarism and lying. All other discipline violations fall under the Discipline Code.

Okay, so how is the Discipline Code different from what CA has had before?

The school will use a demerit system for every infraction or violation that occurs. The demerit system is designed to address a wide range of disciplinary infractions during the school day and school activities in as fair and impartial a manner as possible. Points are assigned to each violation and consequences will be enforced based on the number of demerits accumulated. There are new suggested guidelines for assigning demerits laid out in the Code of Conduct handbook.

How are demerits organized?

Minor

0.5-5 Demerits: Possible consequences include a formal warning, 1-5 hours of Morning Detention, Saturday School, a written apology/explanation, call to parents, and/or conference with Head of Upper School.

Moderate

6-8 Demerits: Possible consequences include 6-8 hours of Morning Detention, Saturday School, a written apology/explanation, a meeting with parents, loss of privileges, a Disciplinary Committee Meeting or an Honor Council Hearing, an Official Notice on Student Record, and/or Behavioral Probation.

Major

9-20+ Demerits: Possible consequences include 9-20 hours of Morning Detention, Saturday School, a written apology/explanation, a meeting with parents, loss of privileges, a Disciplinary Committee Hearing or an Honor Council Hearing, an Official Notice on Student Record, Behavioral Probation, Suspension, or Expulsion.

What happens when a student violates the Code of Conduct?

Teachers will talk with the student about the violation outside of class, submit a report to the CA administration, and if the violation falls within the "moderate" or "major" range for demerits, a Disciplinary Committee Meeting will be held. Before this meeting occurs the Head of Upper School will print a Student Rights sheet for the student and parent to sign. The Student Rights sheet should be returned within two school days of the alleged violation. The Student Rights sheet asks the student to state how he/she will approach a Disciplinary Committee meeting. They have two options:

- a. *Signing “A” means you admit to the alleged violation, and you will appear before the Disciplinary Committee to discuss your case (submitting a written statement & appearing is STRONGLY recommended).*
- b. *Signing “B” means you do NOT admit to the alleged violation, and you will appear before the Disciplinary Committee with a written statement to discuss your case (appearing & submitting a written statement to the Disciplinary Committee is REQUIRED if you are denying the allegation).*

A parent’s signature indicates that the parent and student have discussed the alleged violations of the Code of Conduct. It does not imply agreement or disagreement with the allegation(s).

Another committee? What’s the Disciplinary Committee?

Yes. There will be three faculty members appointed by the Head of School to hear cases of discipline violations that are serious in nature or repetitive offenses. The committee will listen to and consider statements from the referring teacher and the student alleged to have violated the code of conduct in order to make recommendations to the Head of School for disciplinary consequences.

When does the Disciplinary Committee meet?

In addition to meeting for violations that are “moderate” or “major,” the Disciplinary Committee will meet once a student has accumulated a certain number of demerits to reach a “level”---these demerits are not counted in categories but are a total aggregate of all offenses. These levels are the tipping points for scheduling a committee meeting: 7, 14, 21, and 28 demerits. At these hearings, individualized discipline will be discussed and recommendations will be forwarded to the Head of School.

A student who accumulates more than 30 demerits in a year may be dismissed from Clarksville Academy. Student demerit accumulation will be reviewed at the end of the first semester and an excessive accumulation may result in a student being placed on behavioral probation or not receiving an offer for reenrollment.

Does the Disciplinary Committee Determine Consequences?

No. Head of School assigns the consequences based on the Disciplinary Committee’s recommendations. She can modify, adopt, or reject the recommendations.

Do Parents Participate in Disciplinary Committee meetings?

Committee meetings are for upholding the Code of Conduct and the student’s learning experience. Parents’ voices and participation would be acceptable through communication with the Head of School. Should the student desire to have an adult present with them at the hearing, they may ask any member of the faculty or staff who they interact with on the campus to be present.

What if there is a conflict of interest between someone serving on the Disciplinary Committee and the student sitting before the Committee?

If any faculty member has a real or perceived conflict of interest in a particular hearing, that person is expected to recuse him/herself and an alternate will take his/her place on the Council.

What About Confidentiality?

All Disciplinary Committee findings, reports, and recommendations are held in the strictest of confidence. Maintaining confidentiality for a student going through this process is of paramount concern. Disciplinary Committee Members and all individuals involved in cases are forbidden to discuss cases outside of what is required by their obligations.

While students have the option to appear before the Honor Council or not, all students called to a Disciplinary Committee meeting are required to be present.

This Sounds Nice, But Does it Really Work?

Yes. One student at a time.

Here are some statistics that explain why implementing an Honor Code is important for Clarksville Academy:

Sean Scapellato's TALKING POINTS: Why Honor Codes Matter, Why Student-led Honor Councils Work

- About 20% of college students from across the nation admitted to cheating in high school during the 1940's.¹
- In a 2001 study of over 1500 high school students, 72% admitted one or more instances of serious cheating on written work.²
- In the same survey, 15% admitted purchasing a report or essay from a paper mill site.³
- 52% had admitted to copying something from the Internet without proper citation of the source (note: this does not account for the inadvertent cases of plagiarism).⁴
- 45% admit to inappropriate collaboration with another student or adult on a written assignment.⁵
- 40% of undergraduates and 30% of graduate students (and almost 20% of faculty) do not think that "cut and paste" plagiarism on homework is moderate or serious cheating.⁶
- Most cheaters have higher GPAs than non-cheaters (3.41 on average v. 2.85).⁷ The supposition is not that their GPAs are higher because they cheat, but that cheaters

¹ See <http://www.glass-castle.com/clients/www-nocheating-org/adccouncil/research/cheatingbackgrounder.html>.

² See Strauss, Valerie. "The Answer Sheet." The Washington Post 17 March 2010, available at <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/higher-education/new-mit-study-on-student-cheat.html>.

³ See id.

⁴ See id.

⁵ See id.

⁶ See id.

⁷ See "Eight Astonishing Facts About Cheating," Online Education Database, available at <http://oedb.org/library/features/8-astonishing-stats-on-academic-cheating>.

are often successful already and feel driven to cheat in order to maintain or increase their success.⁸

- In science and math courses, “students who copy more than 30 percent of their homework problems have more than three times the course failure rate as other students, even if they started the course with the same math and physics abilities.”⁹
- Among cheaters, almost 20% have no remorse about their actions.¹⁰
- The American public has a bigger problem with cheating than do university officials (41% v. 34%).¹¹ The surveyors attribute the attitude “to [a] decreased stigma surrounding the actions and an increase in emphasizing a stockpile of rewards and honors over hard work and dedication.”¹²
- Of the college students surveyed, between 75% and 98% say they began their cheating habits when they were in high school.
- 85% of high school students surveyed—even those who do not cheat—think cheating is essential to success.¹³
- 95% of Cheaters do not get caught—either by non-detection from instructor or by instructor ignoring the problem.¹⁴
- Honor Codes are instrumental in reducing instances of cheating because they create cultures of integrity, especially when the students maintain and implement the process, as opposed to a “top-down” system where the administration “polices” the students.¹⁵
- “Students at institutions with honor codes frame the issue of academic integrity in a fundamentally different way from students at non-code institutions... Although honor code students feel the same pressures from the larger society as their non-code colleagues, they are significantly less likely to use such pressures to rationalize or justify their own cheating. Rather, they refer to the honor code as an integral part of a culture of integrity that permeates their institutions.”¹⁶
- “[A]n honor council is an important and necessary element in combating against a culture of cheating, because a student-led committee which fights against cheating represents a vital link between the individual student and the values of the community.”¹⁷
- “[S]tudent-led groups responsible for forming, enforcing, and promoting academic integrity create values which represent the community culture of the school and

⁸ *See id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *See Id.*

¹¹ *See id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *See id.*

¹⁵ *See* Callahan, David. “Why Honor Codes Reduce Student Cheating.” *The Huffington Post*, 14 Dec. 2010, available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-callahan/why-honor-codes-reduce-st_b_795898.html.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Bloomfield, Brian J. “The Honorable Thing to Do: A Survey and Analysis of Honor Codes and Councils in DC Independent Schools,” available at <http://www.ethicsed.org/programs/integrity-works/pdf/bloomfield.pdf>.

prepare students for more advanced citizenship roles in society after they graduate.”¹⁸

- In surveys of 77 independent schools in Washington D.C., the most successful honor codes were implemented with its three major purposes being RESPECT (72.2%), RESPONSIBILITY (44.4%), and INTEGRITY (38.4%).¹⁹
- The most commonly cited components of successful honor codes are lying, stealing, cheating, and an intolerance for those who do.²⁰
- “[F]ighting against cheating must come from within the student sub-culture and be nurtured by the adults in the community. A student-led honor council is one way to build such culture.”²¹

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *See id.*

²⁰ *See id.*

²¹ *Id.*