

Facts Sheet 2 Plagiarism: What is plagiarism and how can it be avoided?

The ATA position

Cheating and plagiarism are TOTALLY unacceptable. Tutors should NEVER engage in conduct that involves cheating or plagiarism. Tutors should ALWAYS act in the best interests of the student and should seek to make their students independent learners.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined as the passing off of a person's literary, artistic or creative work as one's own, or the use of another's work without crediting it to the owner.

How is cheating different from plagiarism?

Cheating, which includes plagiarism, may include the following:

- A tutor or coach doing the work of the student. This includes assignment work or school based assessment work. All students must be guided and mentored appropriately. Passing off a tutor work or effort as one's own is not appropriate and constitutes cheating.
- Cheating can also occur when a tutoring business, coaching college or tutor submits work for entry into a competition or award. If the students' work is altered, amended or modified by the tutor and then submitted then this constitutes cheating.
- Forcing students with low levels of literacy to memorise particular kinds of answers in an effort to mask the child's actual level of literacy. This both undermines the student and creates dependencies both of which subvert families and students.

How can parents detect cheating?

Cheating can be detected in a number of ways. A students' marks or assessment work may improve rapidly without any apparent increase in effort from the student. Cheating may also be detected when a student copies information from printed matter, or from electronic sources (websites) without due acknowledgement.

Cheating creates dependencies and can be detected when the student continually asks for help despite being shown and taught how to do something. A student's learned 'helplessness' can lead a tutor or parent to wanting to help. However, great care must be exercised to avoid creating dependencies which can then lead to parents/tutors doing the work on behalf of the student.

How can cheating be minimised?

Parents need to treat their children as lifelong learners and not opt for a shortcut or place the outcomes ahead of the educational process which may be a struggle. Whilst there may be a goal, such as an academic prize, university entrance, Selective Schools entrance, entry by scholarship into a private school or OC (Opportunity Class) placement parents must not allow tutor to cheat on behalf of their children as in the long run this undermines their capacity to learn and cope with academic challenges.

For more information contact:

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