

## **Pensacola Catholic High School Plagiarism Policy**

There are few intellectual offenses more serious than plagiarism in academic and professional contexts.

### **What Is Plagiarism?**

Definition: Plagiarism is the unaccredited use (both intentional and unintentional) of someone else's words or ideas.

Some actions are unquestionably plagiarism:

- Buying, stealing, or "borrowing" a paper, including, of course, copying an entire paper or portions of an article from the Internet;
- Hiring someone to write your paper; and
- Copying large sections of text from a source without quotation marks or proper citation.

Some actions that one might not consider plagiarism but are plagiarism:

- Using the words of a source too closely when paraphrasing, where quotation marks should have been used;
- Paraphrasing someone's ideas without giving credit;
- Building on someone's ideas without citing their spoken or written work; and
- Having a parent write a paper for a student.

### **How to Avoid Plagiarizing: Documenting, Citing, and Crediting a Source**

The best way to avoid plagiarism is to document/cite/credit the source.

Here is a brief but non-exhaustive list of what must be documented:

- Words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium.
- Information gained from interviews or speaking with another person, face-to-face, over the phone, video conferencing, or in writing.
- Do not copy the exact words or a unique phrase.
- Do not reprint any diagrams, illustrations, charts, pictures, or other visual materials.
- Do not reuse or repost any electronically available media, including images, audio, video, or other media.
- The Bottom Line: Document any words, ideas, or other productions that originate somewhere else.

Here is a brief but non-exhaustive list of what does not need to be documented:

An individual's own:

- Writing about lived experiences, observations, insights, thoughts, and conclusions about a subject; and
- Writing about results obtained through a lab or field experiments;
- Artwork, digital photographs, videos, audio records, etc.

Other areas that do not require documentation:

- Using *common knowledge*, such as folklore, common sense observations, myth, urban legends, and historical events (but not historical documents); and
- Using generally accepted facts, e.g. pollution is bad for the environment, including facts that are accepted within particular discourse among communities, e.g. in the field of composition studies, "writing is a process" is a generally accepted fact.

### **What is *Common Knowledge*?**

Generally speaking, information that is undocumented in at least five credible sources is considered *common knowledge*. However, when in doubt, document or cite the source.

Students are responsible for knowing when to document or cite a source and will be held accountable.

For more information on how to avoid plagiarism and documenting sources, please visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.