

Honor Council

[It is recommended that the school administration and AIC include a legal review in the design of their Honor Policies and particularly those policies relating to the Honor Council]

The Honor Council is an important collaboration between the students and adults to support the goal of academic integrity at [school name]. Service on the Honor Council requires meaningful dedication and time commitment from all members. Maintaining confidentiality of all proceedings and one's own personal record of integrity are essential requirements for participating on the Honor Council.

The Honor Council is a volunteer, extra-curricular service activity of students and adults. It is not a court of law and acts only as a communication, review, recommendation, and education service of [school name]. The [school name] administration is responsible for all final decisions as to the disposition and consequences related to violations of the school's Honor Code.

Responsibilities^{1 2}

The Honor Council is responsible for reviewing specific cases in which the Honor Code may have been violated and making recommendations to the school administration. The Honor Council will:

1. Provide confidential reporting and hearing process for students or faculty to report suspected Honor Code violations,
2. Suspected Honor Code violations will be forwarded to an Honor Council Executive Committee to determine if reported violations requires the review of the full Honor Council,
3. The Executive Committee will inform relevant individuals of the Honor Council hearing date, time and location and require student(s) in question to confirm notification of parents/guardian,
4. During a hearing, the Honor Council will seek and review relevant information from the reporting individual(s) and from the student(s) in question of Honor Code violations,
5. The Honor Court will decide by consensus whether or not the Honor Code has been violated.
6. If the Honor Code was violated, the Honor Council will identify an appropriate consequence,
7. The Honor Council will refer facts of the case and recommendation of consequences to the school administration,
8. After learning the administration's decision, the Honor Council will inform student(s) in question and reporting individual(s) of the decision and any associated consequences.
9. The Honor Council will maintain secure and confidential records of all hearings. These records will be destroyed at the conclusion of the students' graduation year.

Membership and Composition^{3 4 5 6}

The Honor Council shall be formed in the spring of every year to begin its service in the fall of the next school year. Members shall serve for one year with the option of renewable terms. The committee shall consist of twelve student members (four each from sophomore, junior and senior classes), one administrator, and three classroom teachers (each teacher to be from a different academic department). One of the teachers shall be designated the faculty sponsor. Faculty and administrative appointments to

¹ Adapted from Montclair Kimberly Academy, Mont Clair, NJ – Private –

<http://www.montclairkimberley.org/home/about/honorcode>

² Adapted from Lexington Catholic High School, Lexington, KY – Private Religious -

http://www.lexingtoncatholic.com/honor_council.htm

³ Lexington Catholic High School, Lexington, KY – Private Religious –

http://www.lexingtoncatholic.com/honor_council.htm

⁴ Staples High School, Westport, CT – Public – <http://ethicsed.org/programs/integrity-works/pdf/StaplesCT.pdf>

⁵ Gould, D. B. L. & J. J. Roberts, (2007) A handbook for developing and sustaining honor systems. Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education. Portland, OR.

⁶ Monsignor Donovan Catholic High School, Athens, GA – Private Religious – <http://www.mdchs.org/main/>

the Honor Council will be designated by the Principal. There should be a minimum of seven Honor Council members present to host a hearing.

Students must complete and submit an Honor Council application which includes two faculty recommendations. Student applicants must have a record free of honor violations in the past 9 months, maintains a GPA above 2.5 and not be involved in the student council or as an officer of any other extra-curricular activity. The Honor Council faculty sponsor and administrative representative will make final selection of Honor Council members. The Executive Committee of the Student Council may make recommendations as to the selection of Honor Council members.

At the beginning of the school year, the Honor Council members will vote for one senior to be the Chairperson. The runner-up will act as Vice-chair. The Chairperson will serve as the chief administrator for all activities of the Honor Council and will preside over all meetings and hearings that come before the Council. Similarly, Council members will elect one member from the junior and sophomore class to serve on the Council's Executive Committee along with the faculty sponsor and administrator.

At the first Honor Council meeting, council members will affirm the Honor Pledge and agree to inform the Council of any personal violations of the Honor Code. If, at any time, a member of the Honor Council is found guilty of an Honor Code violation or they are suspended from school, they will be immediately dismissed from the Council. They will be replaced by a re-opening of the Honor Council application process. Honor Council members are expected to be role models, follow school rules, and uphold the principles and values of the Honor Code.

Confidentiality⁷

All Honor Council members must sign a Pledge of Confidentiality at the beginning of each school year and recite the Pledge of Confidentiality at the beginning of each meeting. The members must understand and respect the need for confidentiality concerning all cases and the details surrounding these cases. Council members are not allowed to discuss cases or their deliberations or recommendations about any case with anyone beyond the realm of the Honor Council meeting.

- An Honor Council member who is determined to have discussed Council cases outside of an Honor Council meeting with anyone not on the council or specifically designated by the school Principal will be dismissed from the council,
- All records of the Honor Council are placed in a secure and confidential file maintained by the school administration until the student in violation of the Honor Code graduates
- The Pledge of Confidentiality: *I pledge to keep any names and/or case information that I obtain through Honor Council meetings in the strictest of confidence. I promise not to discuss any aspects of Honor Council cases with anyone outside the Honor Council other than those designated by the school administration.*

Referral⁸

A teacher or student can complete a confidential Honor Code referral form and turn it into the Principal's [or other designated administrator] office, if a student is suspected of violating the Honor Code. Students can make their referral anonymously or identify themselves as a witness. Teachers should inform the student in question if they are making an Honor Referral. The student in question should be instructed to avoid discussing the referral beyond informing his/her parents or seeking counsel from another school faculty member that they can choose as an advisor. Teachers are strongly encouraged to refer all suspected Honor Code violations to the Honor Council to provide a record of student violations that may occur in different grades or classes. The Principal will refer the question onto the Honor Council sponsor who will

⁷ Monsignor Donovan Catholic High School, Athens, GA – Private Religious – <http://www.mdchs.org/main/>

⁸ Langley High School, McLean, VA – Public – <http://www.fcps.edu/LangleyHS/honorcode.html>

convene the Honor Council Executive Committee within two school days. The Executive Committee will complete a preliminary review to determine if the referral process should continue. The decision to follow-up on the referral must be communicated to the reporting party (teacher or student) within two school days of receipt by the Honor Council. If the Executive Committee believes there is evidence of an Honor Code violation, the student in question of the Honor Code violation will be given a copy of the referral in order to complete his/her response to the question of an Honor Code violation. The student must return a referral form with their written response to the question of an Honor Code violation and a parent signature to the Honor Council sponsor within two school days.

The student will also choose to mark one of three options on the referral form:

- Acknowledge that he/she violated the Honor Code and accept the penalty recommended by the Honor Council Executive Committee without Principal's review.
- Acknowledge that he/she violated the Honor Code and accept the penalty recommended by the Honor Council; however, the student requests the opportunity to speak to the Honor Council before a final penalty is assigned without Principal's review.
- Maintain that he/she did not violate the Honor Code and request an investigation and hearing be conducted by the Honor Council with findings and recommendation submitted to the Principal.

If requested, the Honor Council will schedule a date and time to hear the student's case, and submit its recommendations to the Principal for the final decision. The hearing cannot be scheduled without the student in question's returned referral form signed by his/her parents or guardian. Honor Council members may recuse themselves if they believe a unique relationship with a reporting party or student in question might compromise their ability to make a fair recommendation.

Hearing Procedures^{9 10 11}

- Honor Council Chair welcomes all participants to hearing that may include reporting individual(s) and student(s) in question and their faculty advisor(s)
- The Honor Council restates its Confidentiality Pledge and encourages all present to honor the pledge
- Executive Committee member explains the case to all present and reads all statements on referral form
- All but the Honor Council are excused from hearing room and then individually return to present additional observations and respond to questions from the Council
- The student in question is invited to give his or her statement in the presence of their advisor and follow-up questions from the Honor Council are heard.
- The student in question is dismissed so that the Council can review the case. The student's advisor is invited to give a statement regarding the character of the student,
- Honor council members discuss the case and vote on three possible recommendations to be forwarded to the Principal: (1) Not Guilty and the resulting records are destroyed, (2) Negligent: there is some negligent behavior by the student in question, but not sufficient evidence of intent to violate the Honor Code or the violation is minor, the recommendation is a warning and completion of an Honor Code assignment, (3) Guilty with recommendation for consequences forwarded to the Principal

⁹ Gould, D. B. L. & J. J. Roberts, (2007) A handbook for developing and sustaining honor systems. Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education. Portland, OR.

¹⁰ Monsignor Donovan Catholic High School, Honor Code Handbook (2004), Athens, GA – Private Religious – www.mdchs.org/main/

¹¹ Lexington Catholic High School, Lexington, KY – Private Religious – http://www.lexingtoncatholic.com/honor_council.htm

- The Honor Council should work for consensus agreement; however, a guilty, negligent, or not guilty vote can be reached if two-thirds of the Honor Council agree
- After the Council reaches its agreement, the student in question and their advisor are invited back into the hearing room to learn of the recommendation (not guilty, negligent, guilty) that will be forwarded to the Principal (the student will not be told recommended consequences until the Principal’s approval).
- After the Principal’s review and approval, an adult and student member of the Council meet with the student in question (and their advisor if they choose) to provide a written finding and any consequences for the case. A copy of this finding dated on the meeting date and signed by the student will be place in his/her Honor Council folder.
- All records from the hearing and follow-up meeting are securely and confidentially stored with other Honor Council files with the school administration

Consequences

Finding of Negligence

The Honor Council will assign a reflective activity to be completed in writing where the student will show understanding of how greater attention and adherence to the Honor Code could have avoided the negligent act.

Consequences Recommended for Honor Code Violations ^{12 13 14 15 16 17}

| | Minor Offense | Meaningful Offense (not pre-meditated) | Meaningful Offense (Pre-Meditated) |
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| First | 50% off assignment, offer to redo for full credit, written reflection assignment for teacher | 0% on assignment, offer to redo for 50% credit, 9-month probation for Honor Council or Honor Societies, written reflection assignment for teacher | 0% on assignment, 9-month probation for Honor Council or Honor Societies, written reflection assignment for teacher |
| Second | 0% on assignment, offer to redo for 50% credit, 9-month probation for Honor Council or Honor Societies, written reflection assignment for Honor Council | 0% on assignment, disqualification for Honor Council or Honor Societies, 30-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, written reflection assignment for teacher | 0% on assignment, disqualification for Honor Council or Honor Societies, 30-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, 10 hours of community service, written reflection assignment for Honor Council |
| Third | 0% on assignment, disqualification from Honor Council or Honor Societies, 30-day | 0% on assignment, 45-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, 10 hours of community | 0% on assignment, 45-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, 10 hours of community service, 2-day |

¹² Mainland Regional High School, Linwood, NJ – Public –

<http://www.mainlandregional.net/school%20information/honor%20code.html>

¹³ Woodside High School, Woodside, CA – Public – <http://www.woodsideshs.org/acadintegpoli.htm>

¹⁴ Lexington Catholic High, Lexington, KY – Private Religious -

http://www.lexingtoncatholic.com/honor_council.htm

¹⁵ Radnor High School, Radnor, PA – Public –

http://radnortsd.schoolwires.com/60020315135951217/lib/60020315135951217/honor_code_07aug30.pdf

¹⁶ The Montclair Kimberley Academy Honor Code Handbook (2004) , Mont Clair, NJ – Private –

<http://www.montclairkimberley.org/home/about/honorcode>

¹⁷ Langley High School Honor Code, Mc Lean, VA – Public – <http://www.fcps.edu/LangleyHS/honorcode.html>

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| | suspension of all extra-curricular activities, apology letter to instructor | service, written reflection assignment for Honor Council | in-house suspension, written reflection assignment for Principal and possible loss of honors or AP course participation |
| Fourth | 0% on assignment, 45-day suspension of all extra-curricular activities, 10 hours of community service and reflection paper to Honor Council | 0% on assignment, 45-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, 10 hours of community service, 2-day in-house suspension, written reflection assignment for Principal | 0% on assignment, 45-day suspension from all extra-curricular activities, 20 hours of community service, 2-day out-of-school suspension, loss of honors or AP course participation, written reflection assignment for Principal |

[Other consequences noted in school policies include: detentions¹⁸ and refusal to offer letters of recommendation¹⁹]

Appeals^{20 21}

The process of appealing the findings and consequences of an Honor Code violation is as follows:

- Student in question and/or parent or guardian will file a written statement requesting the appeal and their justification for the request within five school days of the dated finding,
- The Principal will review the appeal letter, student’s Honor Council folder and meet (at their discretion) with the Executive Committee of the Honor Council,
- The Principal schedules and meets with the parents and student in question,
- Based on this meeting, the Principal affirms or alters the recommendations and consequences of the initial finding and documents the decision for the student’s Honor Council folder,
- The Principal informs the Honor Council and original interested parties of the result of the appeal,
- All documents involved with an appeal will be kept with the student’s original Honor Council folder,
- If the penalty is overturned by the Honor Council, all paperwork involving the supposed violation will remain in the student's guidance folder.

¹⁸ Montclair Kimberly Academy, Mont Clair, NJ – Private –

<http://www.montclairkimberley.org/home/about/honorcode>

¹⁹ John Marshall High School, Los Angeles, CA – Public – http://www.johnmarshallhs.org/academic_policies.jsp

²⁰ Mainland Regional High School, Linwood, NJ – Public –

<http://www.mainlandregional.net/school%20information/honor%20code.html>

²¹ Langley High School, Mc Lean, VA – Public – <http://www.fcps.edu/LangleyHS/honorcode.html>