

Academic Integrity Violation: A Teacher's Response Sheet

A fair, defensible sequence for grades 6–12. Print it, keep it in the drawer, use it the day you need it.

The six-step response

1. State the charge plainly, in private.

"I think this part of your essay is not yours. I want to talk about it." Not in front of the class. Not in the hallway.

2. Show the evidence.

The matched paragraphs, the two identical homework sets, the citation that does not resolve. If you cannot show it, you are not ready to have the conversation.

3. Let the student answer, and actually listen.

Some of the time the answer changes the picture. A student who shared notes with a friend who then copied them has done something different from the student who copied.

4. Decide what it was.

Name the category before you name the consequence.

5. Attach the consequence to the assignment.

A grade consequence on the affected work, plus a deadline for the honest version. Not a permanent zero. Not a behavior referral for a homework problem.

6. Write it down and tell the family the same day.

One short factual record. One short factual message.

When it stops being only your call

Hand the case to an administrator when any of these is true.

- **A repeat** after a documented conference.
- **A major assessment** — a final, a state test, an AP exam.
- **Stolen or altered records** — gradebook access, an answer key, a changed grade.
- **More than one student** acting in a coordinated way.
- **Any consequence beyond the gradebook** — honor society membership, class rank, athletic eligibility.

Your handbook wins. This sheet describes a defensible sequence, not your school's policy. In a U.S. public school, *Goss v. Lopez* (1975) requires notice of the charges, an explanation of the evidence, and a chance for the student to respond before a suspension of ten days or less. This is general information, not legal advice.

The record, and the conversation

Six lines per case. The record exists so a future adult can see what already happened — not to prove you were right.

Incident record

DATE / CLASS PERIOD

ASSIGNMENT

WHAT I OBSERVED (ONLY WHAT I CAN STILL SHOW NEXT MONTH)

WHAT THE STUDENT SAID (INCLUDING THE PARTS THAT CUT AGAINST ME)

WHAT WAS DECIDED

HONEST WORK DUE — DATE

Before you file it, check four things

- Could the student read this record and recognize the conversation they were in?
- Is every factual claim in it something you can still show next month?
- Does it record what the student said, including the parts that cut against you?
- Does it name a specific next step with a date, so the case can actually close?

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The five-move conversation

Short, private, factual, and finished in five minutes. The goal is not a confession. It is a shared understanding of what happened and what the student will do about it.

Move	What it sounds like
Open with the fact, not the verdict	"These two paragraphs match a site I found. Tell me about them."
Let the silence sit	Most students fill it. Some of what they say will change your mind.
Separate the act from the student	"This was copied" is about the paper. "You are a cheater" is about a person, and it ends the useful part of the conversation.
Name what happens, all of it, at once	The grade, the redo, the deadline, the call home. No drip-feed of consequences over three days.
End on the path back	"Turn in the real version by Friday and we are square on this." Then honor that exactly.

If you cannot prove an AI case, handle it as a grading question. Ask the student to reproduce the thinking in front of you. If they cannot, the work does not demonstrate the standard — a judgment you can defend without an accusation you cannot take back.