WESLEYAN SCHOOL

HONOR COUNCIL
HANDBOOK

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The Honor Code

Every student is honor-bound to refrain from lying, cheating, and stealing.

A student’s word is his or her bond.

1. **Lying** is the intentional falsifying of or denial of fact, the intentional creating of a false impression, or the breaking of a pledge.

2. **Cheating** is seeking to gain an unfair advantage in academic work by giving or receiving privileged information, giving or receiving unauthorized help, or by representing another’s work or ideas as one’s own.

   **Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. It is defined as either intentionally or unintentionally borrowing someone else’s words, ideas, or facts without giving credit to the source of those materials. Neglecting to acknowledge the inclusion of another’s intellectual property constitutes an act of plagiarism.

3. **Stealing** is the taking of anything without the right or without the consent of the owner.

The Honor Pledge

I pledge my honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.

The mission of Wesleyan School requires that the education of its students be “guided by Christian principles and beliefs.” Therefore, the school believes that our calling is to help each student become a person of integrity who models Christ-like character. We desire to produce honorable citizens who practice a Biblical lifestyle. We desire that our students do the right thing for the right reason and find satisfaction in being a person of integrity. The benefits of developing honorable character will last long after each student has graduated from Wesleyan.

All members of the Wesleyan community are expected to live honorably.
Letter from the Head of School

What does it mean to live a life of honor? As a school that seeks to honor and follow Jesus Christ above all else, the answer to that question lies in the inspired Word of God. Micah 6:8 tells us, “The Lord God has told us what is right and what he demands: See that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern, and humbly obey your God” (CEV). As human beings who possess a sinful nature, bent on our own destruction, we are masters at justifying our actions and trying to convince ourselves and others that the shortcuts we take somehow make sense, given the circumstances. This gets to the heart of the Honor Code and its importance at Wesleyan: living a life of honor is not dependent upon the circumstances in which we find ourselves but is defined by our commitment to conduct ourselves by a set of values that is unchanging. In short, it is easy to be honorable when things are going well for us, or when others are watching; it is a true test of our character to conduct ourselves honorably in the face of temptation and difficulty.

God’s expectations of our behavior are clear, and as a school, it is incumbent on us to clearly distinguish between God’s law and the rules of man. Being on time, tucking in your shirt, and ending a conversation with an adult with “Sir” or “Ma’am” are good habits to form and serve as exercises in self-discipline; however, none of these things necessarily speak to your character. That is one of the reasons we deal with violations of Wesleyan rules differently than we do violations of the Honor Code. God’s law is different. In spite of our attempts to justify otherwise, we all know that lying, cheating, and stealing are wrong, not just in the eyes of man, but in the eyes of God. As the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 2:15, God’s law has been written on our hearts and on our conscience.

The purpose of the Honor Code is not to catch students doing something wrong. Our hope is to use the Honor Code as a teaching tool, to instill in students an understanding of these values that form the basis of good character. We hope to create a culture in which students do not have to lock their lockers or hide their belongings, and in which their word is their bond. The world is in desperate need, and in short supply, of men and women who view integrity and character as integral to who they are and not just something they do as long as it does not cost them anything. This is a life skill that is every bit as important as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration as we prepare our students for work and life in the 21st century culture.

It is my greatest hope that our students will not simply learn to tolerate the Honor Code, but to agree that living a life of honor and integrity will be celebrated and embraced and will cultivate a lifetime of decisions in career and personal relationships that will encapsulate the school’s JOY (Jesus, Others, Yourself) motto, bringing about a respect for self and others that remains steadfast in good times and bad. At the conclusion of our time on this earth, it will be the way we lived our lives, not the wealth and notoriety we accumulated, that will be remembered by the people we leave behind. I hope and pray that the Wesleyan community will be known as one that instills and celebrates lives of honor.

Chris Cleveland
Head of School
Community Responsibilities

Humans were made to live in community (Genesis 1: 26-28) and striving for the well-being of the community is the calling of every member of the community. Thus, upholding the honor of the Wesleyan community is not solely the work of the Honor Council. Every student, faculty member, and parent should take upon himself or herself the responsibility of creating an environment in which honesty, fairness, and personal integrity are expected.

Students

In joining the Wesleyan community, students are consenting to play their part in upholding Wesleyan’s high standards for character. It is foremost the students’ responsibility to ensure that their community is one built on trust and honor. All students must do the following:

- Sign the honor pledge in full as a guarantee of authentic work.
- Understand a teacher’s work policy and the teacher’s expectations. Ask if something is unclear; ignorance is no excuse.
- Attempt to intervene in an honor violation that is taking place by discreetly speaking to those involved.
- Upon witnessing or receiving evidence of an honor violation, report the violation to a teacher or Honor Council advisor.
- Cooperate in any Honor Council cases and accept any honor-centered education.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of Honor Council proceedings by not talking about cases before, during, and after hearings. This includes communication on social media, text messages, and email.
- Realize that Honor Council cases take precedence over all other extra-curricular or after-school activities.

Parents

Parents are the most influential force on children; it is their example that is followed and their attitudes that are reiterated by their children. To support their children, as well as the school in its mission to raise up their children, parental responsibilities include the following:

- Create a home environment that values honesty.
- Fully support the Honor Code, the Honor Council, and the process.
- Parents and other members of the Wesleyan community are expected to honor the privacy of those involved in a hearing.
Faculty

Faculty members of Wesleyan School must also uphold all aspects of the Honor Code by doing the following:

- Serve as a model for the virtues associated with honor.
- Set specific standards in the classroom so that there are no questions about expectations.
- Set positive testing situations.
- Include all expectations within the course syllabus.
- Understand that an honor violation may not be handled at the faculty’s discretion.
- Report all forms of honor violations witnessed or reported by a student.
- Appear before the Honor Council to present evidence.
- Serve as an advocate for a student accused of an honor violation, when asked.
- Be open to education about honor.
- Serve as a mentor to new faculty who may not understand the Honor Code.
- Maintain confidentiality on any case presented.
- Realize that Honor Council cases take precedence over all other extra-curricular or after school activities. Be supportive if an Honor Council member must miss an activity.
- Be as supportive of the Council and its decisions as possible. Realize that sometimes the Council is privy to information of which a faculty member may not be aware.
The Honor Council

The Honor Council is a body of students and faculty advisors entrusted to uphold Wesleyan’s high ideals of honor and to educate the school community about these ideals. There are four faculty advisors to the Council.

Purpose

The Honor Council exists first to help educate the Wesleyan community about principles on which the Honor Code and school’s mission are based. The Council also responds to actions that violate these principles. The Honor Council conducts hearings in response to suspected violations of the Honor Code. The primary purpose of Honor Council hearings is to educate and encourage each person to be an individual of integrity and honor.

Procedures

If a student or teacher witnesses a potential violation or has direct evidence to prove that one has taken place, he or she is obligated to report it to an Honor Council advisor. Ordinarily, two faculty advisors will investigate the charge (question all parties involved and gather information) and determine if the case should move forward.

If it is decided that a hearing is necessary, the student will be required to write a statement explaining the situation, secure an advocate, and notify his/her parents of the pending hearing.

The Hearing

The hearing will be conducted within a reasonable time. Hearings are conducted at the conclusion of the school day. All hearings follow a standard protocol that consists of the following sequence: first, the Chaplain will pray; then the accused will tell the Honor Council what happened in his/her own words; then the Honor Council members will ask clarifying questions; the advocate will be asked to speak on behalf of the accused, and then the Honor Council members will discuss in private; if necessary, the accused will be asked additional questions; the Honor Council members will vote to determine the verdict; at the end of the hearing, the presiding Honor Council member will notify the accused of the verdict, answer any questions, and stress the confidential nature of the hearing. Then the accused will be free to go. The length of the hearing is dependent upon the complexity of the case, the number of students involved in the case, and the honesty of the accused. The Council members conduct the meeting, deliberate, reach a verdict, and make a recommendation of consequences to the Dean of Student Life. The faculty advisors do not vote but guide the student members.
The Panel Hearing

A first offense involving a single underclass student who pleads guilty may be presented to a panel of Honor Council students and advisors. The panel will consist of two faculty advisors and 5 Honor Council members (a group of four junior/senior members and one at-large member of the council). Note: the Honor Council will try to obtain this at-large member from the same grade level as the accused. The accused will still give a detailed explanation of his or her behavior; the panel will accept the guilty plea and will make a recommendation of consequences to the Dean of Student Life. Should it become known to the panel during this process that the situation is more complicated than originally thought because other students are involved, a separate investigation will be launched, and any other student who is accused of an honor violation will also appear before this panel.
Consequences

The administration will issue consequences based on the Honor Council’s recommendation. Standard consequences include:

- All assignments will automatically receive a score of zero.
- Counseling with the High School Dean of Student Life and/or other Wesleyan personnel as determined by the Council’s recommendation.
- Students may be assigned remedial work in the math lab, writing lab, or as otherwise designated.
- In-school suspension or out-of-school suspension will be considered as a possible consequence.
- If found guilty of theft, the student must make restitution.

Principles to Guide the Honor Council

- Stealing is more serious than lying or cheating and will be dealt with more severely.
- The level of egregiousness will be considered.
- The longer the student has lived under the Wesleyan Honor Code, the more accountable he/she will be held.
- The level of forthrightness demonstrated by the student will be considered.
- Repeat offenses will be dealt with more severely than first offenses.

In addition to assigning punishment, it is the Dean of Student Life’s responsibility to counsel any student who has violated the Honor Code in hopes of helping the student to learn from his or her mistake. Wesleyan’s intent is to teach and model honor throughout this process.
Confidentiality

Confidentiality inside the Honor Council is two-sided. Members and advisors who sit on the case have sworn to total confidentiality. Those who are not affiliated with the Honor Council, such as the accused students, teachers, advocates, and witnesses must not share the details with others. Those who appear before the Council, whether found guilty or not, are allowed to talk about the case only with their parents, Dean of Student Life, Honor Council advisors, or their grade chair. Those who participate in an Honor Council case are honor-bound to refrain from sharing their knowledge of the case with peers. Honor violations are taken very seriously but handled privately. Parents and other members of the Wesleyan community are expected to honor the privacy of those involved in a case.

The Role of the Advocate

Appearing before the Council is stressful and emotional. It helps the student to have an adult with whom he or she can discuss issues and concerns that might arise. The purpose of being a student’s advocate is twofold. The advocate provides a reassuring presence and also serves as a character witness. Throughout the process, the advocate will talk to the student about the situation and encourage him or her to be truthful. Also, should an advocate disagree with a verdict, a conversation should take place with the faculty advisors. The faculty should be supportive of the Council and its decisions.

It is the goal of the Honor Council to educate all students on how to live as men and women of honor. Unfortunately, there are times when it appears that a student has made an error in judgment and a hearing is necessary. It is our hope that through this process, Wesleyan becomes a better place. Serving as an advocate involves a sacrifice of time and energy. Please know how vital faculty are to the process and how much we appreciate efforts to build and reinforce honor at Wesleyan School.