

## THE TATTOO

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## Bristol bans cheating in school

By STEFAN KOSKI  
The Tattoo

Bristol schools aren't putting up with students who cheat anymore. A new anti-cheating policy now in effect gives administrators the power to suspend students who cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise undermine the academic integrity of the Bristol schools.

"We need students to understand that we'll take a stand on this," said Deputy Superintendent of Bristol Schools Susan Moreau, who drafted the anti-cheating policy after it was brought to her attention by a Bristol assistant principal that there wasn't any piece of school doctrine that specifically dealt with cheating.

The Bristol school board approved the new policy in August and it's now part of the student handbook.

The new policy defines "cheating" as "the use of unacknowledged materials, information, or other tools to accomplish an academic assignment, test or project."

It also defines "plagiarism" as "the

representation of ideas or words as one's own in any academic exercise," which can include an improper or lack of a source citation.

When asked why cheating had become more prevalent in today's schools, Moreau said, "It's become more commonplace with cell phones."

Students who cheat can use cell phones to send text messages to each other to ask for answers during quizzes and tests.

The new policy strictly forbids the classroom of cell phones, pagers, Palm Pilots, or any other electronic device that uses wireless communication to send pictures or text without the prior approval of the instructor.

The policy also outlines the possible disciplinary actions that the administrators may take against first and second-offense cheaters.

The consequence "varies from reprimand and parent contact to suspension," said Moreau. "Obviously if it is someone in kindergarten or grade school we're going to use it as a learn-

ing opportunity. They don't even really know what cheating is - all they know is that someone else has the answers and they want them."

But, she added, the students in high school who are using devices such as cell phones to cheat can have penalties as harsh as detention and suspension.

The policy reads: "Consistency of consequences is important in sending

a clear message to students that cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated."

At least some students said they approve of the new policy.

"I think it's good to have," said Faraz Abbas, a 14-year-old freshman at Bristol Eastern High School.

While cheating had been happening "since school started," Abbas said, "it's just a few people who want to get things done."

"I've never seen really seen anybody cheating," said 14-year-old Mitchell Harkey, a freshman at Bristol Central High School. But it's a "good policy," said Harkey.

"People work hard to do well and if you're cheating you don't have to do anything," said Harkey.

According to Harkey, the administration isn't being too forward about discussing the new policy with students.

"They basically said if they caught you cheating, they'd rip up your paper and stuff," said Harkey.

Students must understand that cheating "is unacceptable in the academic setting," said Moreau.

"We have expectations from them," said Moreau.

should you cheat?  
read more online at:  
www.ReadTheTattoo.com

## Insider's Guide to High School

Here's the fourth in this year's series of back to school news and advice by *The Tattoo's* teenage staff. Primarily aimed at incoming freshmen or other new students, the annual guide offers plainspoken advice from teens who know the ropes. There's lots more archived on our website. Check it out.

## A cheater's manual

By STEFAN KOSKI  
The Tattoo

"The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made."  
— Groucho Marx

It's a well-known fact that cheating, while an extremely beneficial short-term solution, only hurts the well-meaning student in the long run. It's also against school policy.

That's why nobody should cheat.

There is, however, nothing wrong with "participating in a cooperative learning experience." It can boost grades and self-esteem with relatively little effort. So here are some helpful tips to making the most out of any cooperative learning experience:

1. "Cheating sheets" is a rather harsh term. "Convenience sheets" sounds much better. Having said that, don't write out convenience sheets - type them, reduce the font size, and print them. It keeps large amounts of text small enough to be easily concealed but still legible.

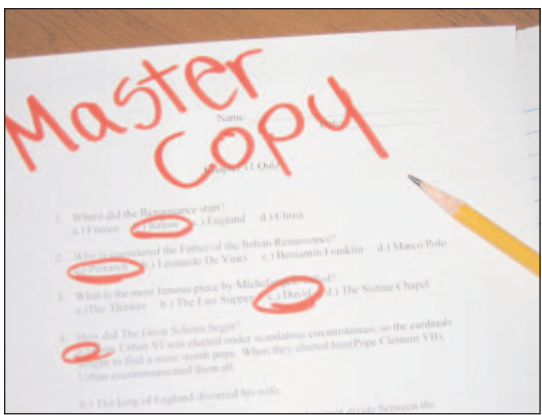


Photo Illustration Ashley Currison / The Tattoo

2. After using such a convenience sheet hold onto it until the end of class. After exiting the classroom, tear it up into as many pieces as possible. Nonchalantly discard half the pieces into the wastebasket of the next class, and the other half of the pieces in the wastebasket of the class after it.

3. Restructure the sentences of any copied papers. For example: "Sally and John went to McDonalds this afternoon because they were hungry for hamburgers," versus, "They were craving hamburgers that afternoon, so John and Sally went to McDonalds."

4. When in doubt of the answer, start writing smaller and smaller, and then start scribbling cursive. People who write in cursive look like they're smart, even if they have no idea what they're talking about.

5. Graphing calculators, while bulky and expensive, can be programmed to do a number of different functions, such as calculate slope, compound interest, and the area of any shape or figure, without any significant amount of thinking from the user. It's well worth the money to buy a Texas Instruments graphing calculator and a cable to con-

## Cheaters risk their future

By JOHN ELFED HUGHES  
The Tattoo

In high school you will have to take many exams that aim to see how well you know what the teachers have taught you.

You have already taken many exams, but in high school you are going to have to continuously revise material you have gone over in class if you are to succeed.

If you prepare a timetable and follow it well in advance, you shouldn't have any problems come the day of the exams.

So, in the last days before that deadly geography exam, don't cram in everything at the last minute because you will confuse yourself. It is a recipe for disaster!

If come the morning of the exam you have failed to revise your work, whatever you do - do not cheat. You might think you can get away with scribbling down some important points on the inside of your pencil case, or use your watch as a calculator for that tricky math question.

Perhaps you didn't remember an important quote that could come in handy in that English exam? Instead, you decide to write it on the desk

nect it to a computer. Go to [www.ticalc.org](http://www.ticalc.org) and download any programs that are needed. Games can also be downloaded for those who are easily bored in math class.

6. Don't bother wasting time trying to find books at a library for the required number of print sources for a paper. Simply cite books off Amazon.com.

If quotes are needed, look for books that are part of Amazon's Search Inside program, which allows users to search the book's text for any terms and view the pages they appear on (when parenthetical referencing is needed). Google Print has a similar program - books in its database can be searched at [www.print.google.com](http://www.print.google.com).

7. Don't write any helpful notes on the palm of the hand. No one looks at the palm of his or her hand while taking a test - it looks unnatural, and it's a dead giveaway that the student is participating in a cooperative learning experience. Instead, write it on the upper part of the leg, just above the kneecap, where shorts or a skirt can hide it. If that's not possible, write it on the side of the forearm, where long sleeves can conceal any incriminating marks. Alternatively, information could be written on a piece of masking tape and then taped to the leg or arm, allowing the student to rip it off and destroy it once done with the test in addition to providing a much better writing surface than skin.

8. Twice as much can be accomplished if half the effort is put into everything. If it's not graded, it's not worth doing.

9. Copying papers takes time - time that whomever has the work done often can't afford to give when an assignment is due. Better to photocopy someone else's work, and then return it to the owner. This gives ample time to copy down all the needed information. As soon as the paper is photocopied, rip off the name at the top of the photocopied page. Tear it into as many pieces as possible and dispose of it immediately. After copying the information from the photocopy, dispose of it in the same manner as a convenience sheet.

10. Most important of all, when someone else asks in an exasperated tone, "Are you cheating?!" calmly reply, "No, I'm cooperatively learning." Then make something up about how the assignment is not even graded, it's just notes for your own use. That always works.

Remember, cheaters never prosper. Cooperative learners, however, get straight As.



Photo Illustration Michel Lee / The Tattoo

## I almost cheated

By SMADAR SAPIR  
The Tattoo

I am a procrastinator. That is just who I am. For some unknown reason, I always end up leaving things for the last minute, especially school work. Umm... deciding to read the three 40-page chapters for my A.P. European test the night before the exam and falling asleep in the middle... nah, I never did that. Me? Never!

You can imagine how hard it is to resist the temptation to cheat while I am sitting in my room with a rather large cup, really a jug, of coffee at two in the morning - trying to somehow come up with an essay for my English class, which is due the next day.

Well, this was the situation about three months ago, when at around one in the morning I was just beginning to write a 10-page essay about the book *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Why was I starting it now, the night before it's due? Well, that's a whole other discussion.

For those of you who have pulled all-nighters in the past, you know how difficult it is to actually think clearly after drinking two cups of coffee in the middle of the night. But yes, this was all my fault.

I do not know why, maybe it was because I was tired or because I did not want to think, I decided to go to [gradesaver.com](http://gradesaver.com) and look up the free essays that it had on *To Kill A Mockingbird*. And voila! In a few minutes, I actually found well-written essays, ready to be printed out. I knew that this was the only thing that could save me.

But then I thought about how my mother would react if she knew that I had cheated, how my teacher would fail me, and how I might get expelled from school. You see, I attend a private, all-girls high school and we have a very strict honor code.

I really think that my school is the only school that makes all the students take out any cellular phones, iPods, and any other device and hand it over to the teachers before tests, in

addition to leaving our backpacks outside the classroom - all to avoid any form of cheating.

Breaking this honor code would mean destroying everything that I have worked for all these years. So, with some good old caffeine and the feeling that I was doing the right thing, I managed to write an 11-page essay by 6 a.m.

I have to admit, though, when I handed in that paper, I was tired, but also very proud of myself.

Three weeks later, my English teacher called the class for a serious meeting. It seemed like not one of us had a clue of what was going on. I came into the classroom and sat down.

I will probably never forget the look on my teacher's face when she walked through the door that morning. She looked at all of us with such anger and disappointment that I felt like I

through my mind as she was speaking. My friends were being punished for the same thing that I nearly did myself! I later found out that there were about six out of the 13 girls in my class who copied what was written on [gradesaver.com](http://gradesaver.com) word for word.

Those girls thought they had the "easy way out," but boy, were they in for a surprise!

After many meetings with the school principal, who was furious and later spoke with the whole grade, warning us that if such a thing happens again, she will expel students, the teacher gave us all our papers back.

I was extremely happy with my grade, and although it was done at the last minute, I knew that I deserved it and worked hard for it.

As for the girls who cheated, their grades were lowered by about 30 points, their parents



Photo Illustration by Michel Lee / The Tattoo

had committed a crime I knew nothing about.

"Girls, I graded your pieces on *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and I have to say that I was absolutely shocked and disappointed with several of you. Did you honestly think that you could copy paragraphs from [gradesaver.com](http://gradesaver.com) and get away with it? Plagiarism, girls, is cheating. You have cheated me, the school, and you have cheated yourselves."

It is hard to explain the thoughts that were running

were called in, and they were placed on academic probation. Worst of all, they lost the teacher's trust, which I think is the worst punishment of all.

It is not worth it to cheat. Cheating is hurting yourself, and why would you want to do that? You know, it takes a lifetime to gain someone's trust, and only a second to lose it.

So guys, make the right decisions. And as for my procrastination problem... well, that will go away before I start college, I hope!

## Don't go down that road

By KASSANDRA RICCI  
The Tattoo

You forgot to study and of course your teacher decides to give a fill-in-the-blank test. Susie, the class nerd, sits right next to you and left her paper in clear view. It would be so easy to just copy her answers.

Resist the temptation because nine out of 10 times, cheating comes back to haunt you. Teachers have noticed the rapidly rising rate of students who cheat and have started to take measures to stop it. Schools have started giving out different tests or making sure nothing but a pen comes into the class with you.

Copying from other students isn't the only way students cheat. Plagiarism is a very common way of cheating.

The sad thing is, most people who plagiarize don't really think they are cheating. They went looking for the information and found it, like the teacher said. They don't really understand that they are stealing someone else's work and calling

it their own.

Of course they'll realize it when they get the paper back with a big fat F. Now teachers can buy software that detects plagiarism.

A new form of cheating has popped up recently that is growing slowly in popularity.

If you go to Google and type in "term papers," you'll find at least 10 advertisements telling you that you can buy a custom term paper written for you on the topic of your choice.

Sounds like a plan, right? There is a glitch, though. The writing may be terrible and the teacher will be able to tell you just copied it. The other possibility is that it is written too well to be yours.

I'm sure there are other forms of cheating I've left out, but my point is that if you cheat you're going to get caught. It might not be that day but someday you are going to need that information and you aren't going to know it.

It is a lot more satisfying when you get an A if you actually do the work.

My advice is just don't do it.

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