**Horseheads Middle School Plagiarism Policy**

Welcome to Horseheads Middle School! As a middle-schooler, you will find that there are a lot of things that are different about school: you will have more freedom, of course – there won't always be a teacher telling you what to do and where to go; however, with this freedom comes more responsibility. More will be expected of you as a student: you will be expected to stay organized, complete your work on time and to the best of your ability, follow all of our school's rules, and be an example of the Raider Way, our guidelines for good character.

One of the things that makes a student at Horseheads Middle School a person of character is **honesty**. You are expected to be honest in all that you do, including academically. Basically, **Academic Honesty** means that any work you hand in is your own. If you copy someone else's homework, put your name on someone else's work, have your parents or older siblings complete a project for you, copy a poem from the internet, or even "work together" on homework by sharing answers (unless the teacher has given permission), then you are being academically dishonest. This is something that is taken very seriously, not just in ELA, but also in all of your other classes.

When you are **Plagiarizing,** or being academically dishonest, you are essentially stealing. In the academic world, this is considered one of the most serious offenses one can commit. Students have failed classes, been thrown out of colleges, and received other consequences for plagiarism. Adults have lost their jobs for claiming someone else's work as their own. It is clear, then, that this is something that you *must* learn how to avoid not only for your time in school, but also for the rest of your life.

Your teachers are experts at what they do; they know what your writing looks like, and most of the time can easily detect when the work you hand in is not your own. If you do so, you risk being labelled a cheater, of course, but it also has an effect on your grade. Any copied work receives a grade of zero, and you cannot make that grade up. You will also receive consequences such as phone calls home, detention, and even office referrals.

Of course, there are times when you will need to incorporate the work of others in your own writing. When you conduct research, reference a specific text, include photos you found online, or want to quote from an article, you will need to properly **cite your sources.** This means that you give credit to the person whose work you are using. Your teachers will help you learn to do this properly.

 We all make mistakes. You might forget to cite a source by accident – don't worry about that; it is all part of learning. However, if you are tempted to use someone else's work in an attempt to fool your teacher, you are risking not only your grade, but also your own reputation. Just be honest with yourself and your teachers, and ask for help when you need it.

 All of the teachers and administrators at the Middle School want you to be successful. We know there will be times when you feel a lot of pressure. You have many classes and many assignments to complete. Although you may feel as if you are all alone, we are here to help you. Together, we will make sure that your time at the Middle School is successful, educational, and awesome.