VCE Authentication Policy and Procedures

1.0 Purpose

This authentication policy establishes clear guidelines and procedures for ensuring the integrity of assessments and preventing cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Such a policy helps maintain a fair and equitable learning environment, where students are evaluated based on their genuine abilities and efforts. By defining the processes for detecting and investigating potential breaches of authentication rules, the policy enables the school to identify instances of misconduct accurately and take appropriate actions when necessary. Additionally, an authentication policy promotes transparency, providing students, teachers, and parents with a shared understanding of the consequences of violating academic integrity standards, Ultimately, its implementation fosters a culture of trust and respect within the educational community, upholding the institution's reputation for high academic standards and ethical conduct.

2.0 Scope

This policy outlines the procedures for overseeing the conduct of assessments, addressing cheating including plagiarism, and conduct investigations and hearings related to authentication breaches. The policy applies to all students and staff involved in assessments.

3.0 Policy Statement

3.1 Academic Integrity and Authentication Breaching

3.1.1 Academic integrity refers to the honest and ethical behaviour expected from students and scholars in their academic pursuits. It involves upholding principles of honesty, trust, fairness, and respect for intellectual property. Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity by submitting their own work, properly citing sources, and not engaging in any form of cheating, plagiarism, or academic misconduct. Academic integrity is crucial to maintaining the credibility and reputation of education institutions, as well as fostering a genuine learning environment where students can develop critical thinking and academic skills with integrity.

3.1.2 Authentication breaching refers to actions taken by students to undermine the authentication process during assessment. This includes any form of cheating, plagiarism, or academic

dishonesty aimed at misrepresenting a student's true abilities or knowledge. Examples of authentication breaching may include copying from someone else's work, using unauthorised materials or devices during exams, submitting someone else's work as their own, and not properly citing sources in written assignments. Authentication breaching compromises the fairness and validity of assessments erodes academic standards, and undermines the integrity of the educational system as a whole. Educational institutions implement strict policies and procedures to detect and address authentication breaching, aiming to promote a culture of academic integrity and uphold the value of honest academic achievements.

3.1.3 The following are examples of this policy being breached. These are only examples and the list is not exclusive.

- Copying from a classmate's paper during an exam or assessment
- Using unauthorised notes, textbooks, or other materials during a test
- Accessing information or answers on a hidden mobile device during an exam
- Submitting work that was completed by some else (e.g., a sibling, friend, or online service)
- Copy-pasting information directly from internet sources without proper citation
- Paraphrasing or rewording content from sources without giving proper credit
- Using online essay mills or 'paper-writing' services to get custom-written essays
- Collaborating with others on individual assignments without permission from the teacher
- Employing advanced technologies, like smartwatches or hidden earpieces, to receive real-time assistance during exams
- Utilising AI-powered tools to generate or paraphrase content for essays or other written assignments. For example, using AI-language models to automatically create essays or articles without proper citation or acknowledgement

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Collection of Evidence

4.1.1 When there is a suspected breach of authentication rules, the subject teacher and/or the VCE Coordinator shall initiate a collection of evidence to ascertain the validity of the allegation.

4.1.2 Relevant evidence may include but is not limited to:

- Discussion with witnesses, supervising staff, and/or other students
- Examination of the conditions under which the assessment was undertaken
- Examination of the student's work
- Copies of unauthorized sources, notes, other student work, and unacknowledged resources
- Samples of other work by the student for comparison, if relevant
- The teacher's record of authentication and opinion about the student's work
- Accurate notes of conversations with witnesses, the teacher, and the student

4.2 Reporting the Allegation

4.2.1 The Breach of Authentication School-Based Assessment Rules Investigation Report must be filled out with details of the incident and any evidence collected should be attached.

4.2.2 The allegation and relevant information will be reported to the Head of School and the VCE Coordinator

4.2.3 The VCE Coordinator will convene the information to the VCE Panel (see section 4.3.3)

4.3 Investigation and Meeting

4.3.1 The VCE Coordinator will organise a meeting with the student and the VCE Panel

4.3.2 The student and their parents/guardians will be informed in writing through direct communication through email with at least 24 hours' notice

4.3.3 The VCE panel includes the subject teacher, VCE Coordinator and Head of School

4.3.4 The student may bring a support person to the meeting for moral support only; this person cannot contribute to the meeting

4.3.5 During the meeting:

- The student will have the opportunity to explain what occurred during the assessment, which resulted in the allegation of a breach of authentication rules
- The student is encouraged to present evidence that may authenticate the work produced as their own, such as drafts of work, practice questions, or a showcase of development
- The VCE Panel may ask the student further questions to gain a complete understanding of the situation

- The VCE Panel will inform the student of the possible consequences for a breach of authentication rules but will not discuss the outcome for this specific allegation
- The student will have the opportunity to review the minutes of the hearing to ensure an accurate reflection of their statements. They may add any other relevant information if requested
- The student will be informed that the outcome of the hearing will be communicated in writing within the next week

4.4 Decision-Making

4.4.1 The VCE Panel will review and discuss the evidence and minutes of the meeting

4.4.2 If the student is found guilty of a breach of authentication rules, the VCE Panel will impose an appropriate penalty

4.4.3 Possible penalties include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal and written warning
- Detention or suspension
- No marks or part marks awarded for the assessment
- Resubmission of the work
- N (Non-Satisfactory) awarded for the outcome
- N awarded for the entire unit

4.4.4 The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the outcome through email

4.4.5 The VCE Coordinator is required to report the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment (VCAA) all occurrences of breaches of rules

4.5 Appeals

4.5.1 Students may appeal a school decision by following AE's *VCE Student Assessment and Grade Management Policy* for grade appeals, and *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures for* general academic or administrative decisions, including, but not limited to, course progress, attendance, and other school-based matters not governed by VCAA assessment rules.

4.5.2 Where a decision relates to an alleged breach of VCAA examination rules or school-based assessment authentication rules, students have a statutory right of appeal to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority under the *Education and Training Reform Act*.

- This right applies only to decisions and penalties arising from breaches of VCAA assessment rules for school-based assessments.

- It does not apply to decisions about satisfactory completion of a course due to attendance or other general school disciplinary matters.

4.5.3 Students may choose to appeal directly to the VCAA and are not required to use the school's internal appeals process before doing so.

- This appeal must be in writing to the VCAA Chief Executive Officer within 14 days of receiving written notice of the school's decision.
- Upon receipt, the VCAA will appoint a nominee to interview relevant parties and attempt resolution.

4.5.4 Students may:

- Use the school's internal appeals process, and/or
- Lodge a direct appeal with the VCAA within the required timeframe

Students should be aware that engaging in the school's internal process does not extend the 14-day deadline for lodging an appeal with the VCAA.

4.5.5 Following the VCAA-facilitated resolution process, the school must notify the student and the VCAA in writing within 7 days whether it has:

- Rescinded its decision and any penalty imposed
- Rescinded the penalty imposed
- Reduced the penalty imposed
- Confirmed both the decision and the penalty imposed

5.0 Document Information

Document Name	VCE Authentication Policy and Procedures
Document Number	VCE-POL-16
Purpose	Compliance with VCAA rules for school-based assessment and VCAA examination rules
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Policy Advisor	Head of School
Approving Authority	Board of Directors

6.0 Change Log

Date	Version	By	Notes