

The  
Honor  
System

WESLEYAN SCHOOL HANDBOOK OF  
STUDENT, FACULTY, AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES



"The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the full light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think, and what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny...it is the light that guides your way"

-Heraclitus

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Revised May, 2011

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## **THE HONOR CODE**

As a member of the Wesleyan Community,  
I will respect God and others  
by being truthful and esteeming the integrity  
of their property and works.

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## **THE HONOR PLEDGE**

I have neither given nor received  
unauthorized aid on this assignment.

## PREFACE

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In November of 1996, Principal Brian Kennerly organized the Honor Committee, which was designed to define the Wesleyan Honor Code and implement an Honor Council. The committee consisted of Brian Kennerly, Jan Azar, Suzanne Greenwood, Gretchen Hall, Shannon Mason, Mike Sutton, and student Eddie Turner. Out of this committee came the first Honor Code book.

At the time of the first publication of the Honor Book during the 1996-1997 school year, the Honor Council was more an idea than a reality; it follows that there were few rules or definite policy at that time. After four years of difficult cases and numerous policy changes, it was obvious that the handbook was in need of revision. In addition, the 2001-2002 school year was the first without any member of the Honor Committee still serving on the Honor Council. Therefore, it seemed the natural point at which to combine the ideals and philosophy of the original committee with the experience and needs of the Council and to write them down for future classes. Thus, the first handbook was revised in May 2001.

Over the ensuing years, the Honor Book has been revised several times. Based on the lessons we have learned and our experiences over the years, we again believe it necessary to review and revise the Honor Book. The basis for the revisions stems from the evolution of Council member's thoughts and the thoughts of the faculty advisors regarding the clarity of the Honor Book, the education of the students and their parents, and the responsibilities of those students as members of the Wesleyan Community living under the Honor Code.

The ultimate purpose of Wesleyan's Honor Code is to instill the ideal of honor and to develop the character of the students living under the Code. Honor is not a notion bound within the walls of Wesleyan but exists as part of our being, which continues with us throughout our lives. In order to ensure this existence of honor later in life, Wesleyan created the Honor Code System.

The Honor Code is not in place solely to punish infractions; the Code functions as an educational resource to develop the students' sense of honor now and in the future. The reason Wesleyan places such a great deal of importance on honor in the education of its students is because the

students' honor and character play a great role during the rest of their lives. As with teaching a young child about right and wrong so that he/she will continue to lead a proper life (Proverbs 22:6), the Honor Code is in place to correct students if they wander off the straight and narrow path so that these impediments do not become a problem in the years after Wesleyan.

The changes contained in this 2011 revision of the Honor Book seek to better explain Wesleyan's vision of honor and its expectations for those who live and lead under the Honor Code. It is Wesleyan's hope that the Honor Code will create a student "whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong ..... He who does these things will never be shaken." (Psalm 15)

*Eddie Turner, Class of 2001*  
*Colleen Horne, Class of 2007*

*Peter Landis, Class of 2004*  
*Ross Thomas, Class of 2011*

## LETTER FROM THE HEADMASTER

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For many of us, our first brush with the term “honor” comes when we learn the fifth commandment in Sunday School, “Honor your father and mother.” This, of course, means that we are to hold our parents in high regard and esteem and give them our respect. The Bible gives no qualifying statement to this commandment. There is no added phrase tacked on at the end such as “so long as they treat us with respect” or “so long as they are good parents.” The Bible states with great economy of words that one of God’s rules for a human existence is communion and fellowship with Him. (It is not insignificant to its importance that this commandment comes just ahead of “Do not murder,” although most people are surprised when this sequence is noted.)

Honor, we believe at this Christian school, comes from a world view which says that the order we see in the world around us is not a happenstance occurrence, but, instead, a creation of God. We are part of that creation and there is a purpose for us in this life. We have instructions in the Bible on how to remain in communion with God and we are not free to do anything that we want or act solely upon our urges without a final judgment promised by our maker. This creator-God has revealed His character to us through His involvement in the world and through Jesus Christ. We are instructed to lead our lives according to what has been revealed to us by Him. It is clear from His word that we are to deal with one another honorably, in ways that are pleasing to God. It is also abundantly clear that the way that is pleasing to God is to love one another as we love ourselves.

Honor, in the context of this school and this belief system, means then that we live in a community in which the trustees, faculty, and staff, through their Christian beliefs, are instructed to hold others in high regard and respect. As believers, they must say what they believe and act in ways which give evidence of their faith. It is around this foundational premise that an honor system can take root and develop if the children see in it a true basis for instructed behavior and an abundantly happy life.

Certainly this is not the prevailing materialist world view of our society and, in this regard, we at Wesleyan are counter-cultural. If, as we are instructed in the book of Matthew, we are to love God with all our hearts and with all our souls and with all our minds and love our neighbor as ourselves, we must attempt to create and live in an honorable community. We must give evidence of that by not lying, cheating, or stealing, for it is in these ways, and others, that we

dishonor one another. Neither can we in such a community tolerate those who insist on perpetually pursuing dishonorable behavior. It is, in the final analysis, only in the seeking after that which is pleasing to God that we can achieve real happiness and it is only with God and God's word as foundation that any code of honor can be maintained over time.

- Zach Young, Headmaster

# THE HONOR CODE

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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 student members of the Wesleyan community are expected to live honorably in the following ways:

## **Being Truthful**

Tell the truth at all times. Lying is commonly defined as not telling the truth, denial of the truth, or withholding the truth. Furthermore, crafting words so that they are not technically a lie is deceptive and is not truthful. You are charged to honor your word.

## **Upholding Academic Integrity**

Do your own work. You are responsible for knowing what kind of aid, if any, is permissible on assignments. You must sign the Honor Pledge in its entirety on each assignment. This affirms that the work is your own. Cheating seeks an unfair advantage over other students, damages your reputation, and undermines the integrity of the school.

## **Esteeming Others’ Property**

Respect others' property and do not take things without the explicit permission of the owner. "Borrowing" books and supplies from someone's locker without his or her knowledge and permission is the same as stealing.

## **Esteeming Others’ Academic Work**

Always cite the work of other people. This includes his or her ideas, information, expressions, and words. Any time you wish to include the work of another person, whether copied or paraphrased, you should parenthetically cite the source and include it in your bibliography. You are responsible for knowing the class writing policy and for consulting with your classroom teacher or the writing lab instructor if any questions arise. **Regardless of intent**, any failure to

give due credit to outside sources is plagiarism since you are turning in work presented as your own when it actually is not.

## **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 outside the hearing.
- 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 clearly cherishes and rewards honesty.
- Support the Honor Code and Council.
- Limit situations at home in which a child would be tempted to lie or otherwise deceive.
- Be conscious of actions and what they model for children; calling in sick for a child when he is merely sleeping in—however routine and seemingly harmless—is an act of

deception and viewed as a lie at Wesleyan. It is confusing for a child to live under one code at home and another at school.

- 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 System.
- 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 has to 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**

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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 primary purpose of the Council in hearings is to educate and encourage each person to be an individual of integrity and honor. The Honor Council conducts hearings in response to suspected violations of the Honor Code.

### **Procedure**

If a student or teacher witnesses a 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 and an Honor Council member 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 required, 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 will be conducted within a reasonable time. The Council members conduct the meeting, deliberate, and reach a verdict. The faculty advisors do not vote but guide the student members. The Honor Council president notifies the accused of the verdict, answers any questions, and stresses the confidential nature of the hearing.

### **Consequences**

Final consequences rest with the Dean of Students who considers the student's level of contrition, the length of time he/she has lived under the Honor Code, previous violations (to determine if this is a pattern or only an isolated incident), and the nature of the offense.

It is the Dean's responsibility to counsel any student who has violated the Honor Code in hopes of helping him or her 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, advocate 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 Students, 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/she can discuss 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/her to be truthful. Also, should an advocate disagree with a verdict then 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.

## **Member Elections**

### *Eligibility*

As with all elected positions, passing grades must be maintained. Honor violations or serious disciplinary actions might disqualify students from seeking membership on the Honor Council. In all cases, a student's final eligibility rests with the election committee.

### *Process*

An application packet is made available to the student body in the spring semester. The packet includes two recommendation forms, which must be completed by faculty members who have taught or coached the applicant within the past two years, and a typed response paper. All applicants must also be interviewed by the faculty sponsors of the Honor Council as well as a group of current Honor Council members.

The interview seeks to reveal the applicant's notions of honor and allows the committee to better understand his/her personal moral code. Committee members rate the interview and application responses, and those scores are then added to scores from the teacher recommendations.

Each candidate for the Council is also required to make a brief speech to his class immediately before the class votes. This speech should consist primarily of the candidate's qualifications and reasons for wanting to be a part of the Honor Council. Each class votes only for its own representatives. Composition of the Council, by grade level, may be no more than a combination of six freshmen and sophomores, and a combination of eight juniors and seniors. Vote results are weighted and combined with the other three scores to determine the representatives.

Selection of the president differs from the election of the class representatives. Any rising senior wishing to run for president must express interest before the application deadline. In the spring, the current members of the Honor Council will vote among themselves to determine the rising senior who will be next year's president. This vote occurs before the general election. Because the Honor Council members have observed each other throughout the year and most intimately know the tasks involved in being president—as well as the personalities of the candidates—they are the most qualified to choose their own president. All other officers of the Honor Council will be decided upon at the beginning of the fall semester.

### **Member Standards**

As representatives of the Honor Council, members are expected to refrain from any activity, honor related or not, that would result in a negative reputation for the member or the Council as a whole. Members are obligated to report any violation of which they are a witness or if they acquire direct evidence of a violation. It goes without saying that Honor Council members must serve as examples of honorable behavior for their peers; they must employ the highest ethical standards themselves and be candid about their moral beliefs with others. All members of the Council must sign the Wesleyan Leadership Contract, expressing their agreement that leaders in this school will be held to a higher standard of conduct than the regular student body.

Honor Council cases take precedence over all other extra-curricular or after-school activities. Members are expected to attend all cases, except in extreme circumstances; athletic games or meets and fine arts performances are excused. Upon the second unexcused absence from a hearing, dismissal will result.

### **Removal**

The administration has the right to remove an Honor Council member at its discretion. A failing grade at the end of the semester results in academic suspension; the student may be reinstated after the next nine-week grading period, provided his/her grade in the failing class is now a passing one. This rule does not prohibit a student from seeking reelection. Any disciplinary action which earns the student a suspension results in removal from the council; in this case, the student may apply for reelection the next year.

Any honor violation during a term on the Honor Council will result in immediate and permanent removal from the Council. Evidence that a member has discussed the details of a case with an uninvolved party will also result in immediate and permanent removal from the Honor Council, as well as a possible honor violation charge.

### **Education**

Established to educate the community, the Honor Council propagates its message of honesty and responsibility through several forums. At the start of each school year, an assembly is held to provide a brief introduction to the Honor Code, as well as a warning against common violations. Additionally, honor-centered class meetings are held at the mid-term and before exams, with a senior member of the Council as well as a faculty advisor speaking on behalf of the Council. These opportunities allow the Council to educate any student who has a misunderstanding about honor at Wesleyan. Also, whenever a particular offense begins to become common, the Dean of Students will give a public reminder during an assembly time. Remember: it is the aim of the Honor Council that this education will prevent violations; neither those accused nor the Council members look forward to hearings.