

An Open Letter to Parents of Conceptual Physics Students

Dear Parents –

We are excited to have your students with us in Conceptual Physics this next year and we look forward to partnering with you as we work through the material. As such, we would like to address an issue that seems to have cropped up more and more the past few years – and that is the issue of academic honesty.

The textbook that we are using is a popular book and as such nearly every homework question has been posted somewhere on the web. Because these problems require students to put in some work, unfortunately several have chosen to take a shortcut and search the internet for the answer. As tutors, we have become very familiar with those sites and can usually recognize those answers when we see them. We have also had students do it the old-fashioned way – and use their parents' answer key for the answers. Either way, this is obviously cheating.

We've even caught students cutting and pasting answers when they are taking online tests.

It may be that you are working with your student on their homework and you need access to the answer key or a website and that is perfectly legitimate. The key is that the student should first try to work the material on their own using the information in the textbook. Then, if they are still struggling, you can feel free to work through the problem with them using the answer key or a website. You will find there are great videos and tutorials online that will assist you and your students in understanding physics concepts. We encourage you to take advantage of those.

Our goal is to encourage students to learn HOW to learn. Obviously the Internet is a great resource for learning and clarification of difficult concepts. We are simply trying to help these students recognize the difference between doing the legwork of learning and simply copying or rewording someone else's explanation without any comprehension.

So, we are asking that you (1) discuss this with your student at the beginning of the year to head off this behavior and (2) assist your student by removing any temptations for easy access to answers.

We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can. This is actually a pretty fun course and we're looking forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

PEP Conceptual Physics Tutors