

Ballyclare Secondary School



External Examinations Conflict of Interest Policy

“Every child deserves a rewarding educational experience.”

<i>Date of last review</i>	<i>October 2023</i>
<i>To be reviewed by</i>	<i>October 2024</i>

Policy with respect to staff involvement with public examinations

Our centre has a duty, as a registered Examination Centre for one or more of the UK awarding organisations (exam boards), to uphold the integrity of public examinations. As with other instances of examination maladministration, the sharing of confidential material relating to any current or future (“live”) public examination series by a member of staff is likely to constitute gross misconduct that is likely to result in dismissal.

We also recognise that a number of current staff are engaged by exam boards in various capacities for the setting, marking, moderating and reviewing of public examinations and, thereby, contribute to the public good. However, those staff may be involved in delivering the same examination specifications to pupils at the school/college. Such staff owe duties to the centre to prepare pupils properly for their public examinations but also to the relevant examination board to preserve the integrity of public examinations. In fulfilling these potentially conflicting duties, staff must act with utmost integrity and take care to manage the potential conflict of interest by ensuring that examination security is not breached in any way, whether deliberately or otherwise. Such staff must remain neutral at all times both with their colleagues and pupils.

The school/college currently only permits staff to be engaged by the exam boards on the following basis:

1. A member of staff must seek permission from the Head/principal (in his/her capacity as Head of Examination Centre) prior to undertaking any role for an examination board and must seek renewed permission from the Headteacher/Principal each year.
2. A member of staff given permission must complete a declaration form for staff involved in public examinations and return it to the Head of Centre who will retain a Register of Staff involved.
3. A member of staff given permission must act with utmost integrity and take care to ensure that examination security is not compromised (deliberately or otherwise) and, if teaching pupils who will sit any examination of whose contents the staff member has, or will have, prior knowledge, the staff member must also sign and adhere to the school/college’s internal protocol, as set out below.
4. A member of staff given permission must declare any training he or she has received from the examination board concerned and must provide details of the examination board’s applicable Conflict of Interests (or other relevant) policy.
5. Staff must treat as confidential the identity of fellow staff involved in examining and must not discuss or speculate on such topics with pupils.
6. Members of staff who are concerned that examination maladministration may have occurred must notify the Head of Examination Centre immediately.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Protocol for staff privy to Confidential Information relating to the contents of any Public Examination sat by any pupil of the school/college.

The sharing of confidential material relating to any current or future (“live”) public examination series by a member of staff is likely to constitute gross misconduct that is likely to result in dismissal. It is prohibited by school policy. It is also prohibited by the Conflict of Interests policies of the various exam boards.

It is incumbent on any member of staff privy to confidential information about public examinations to ensure that they maintain a position of complete neutrality and do not either advantage or disadvantage pupils in the school/college. Staff must ensure the examination syllabus (specification) is covered in full but must also ensure that specific material used in upcoming public examinations is not used in their teaching at the centre or to guide departmental schemes of work.

The aim of this protocol is to put in place measures to prevent the accidental sharing of confidential public examination material within the school/college and, thereby, to protect both the staff member concerned and pupils from allegations of examination maladministration or malpractice.

When a member of staff knows in advance the content (in whole or in part) of any public examination which is to be sat by any pupil, that staff member must not:

1. set any internal exam or revision material for that public examination;
2. save any confidential public examination material on any computer that the staff member uses for teaching or for any other school/college activity without ensuring that that material is stored in a password protected area;
3. bring into public areas within the school/college public examination related paper-work, products or materials on which the staff member has worked, or use departmental printers or photocopiers for such materials;
4. use, in the creation of live public examination papers, specific content which the staff member or a member of his department has created for pupils in current or previous years, or which might be used by colleagues;
5. adapt his or her teaching to fit the questions that the staff member knows are coming up in a “live” public examination (e.g. by spending extra time on a topic, or by covering a topic with a particular slant). The member of staff must adhere to agreed departmental schemes of work;
6. engage in “question spotting” or make any predictions about the contents of the public examination to any pupil or colleague;
7. invigilate any examination in an examination series in respect of which he or she has knowledge;
8. divulge to pupils his or her role with the examination board.