

Ballyclare Secondary School



External Examinations Malpractice Policy

“Every child deserves a rewarding educational experience.”

<i>Date of last review</i>	<i>March 2024</i>
<i>To be reviewed by</i>	<i>October 2025</i>

Purpose of the policy

This policy details the procedures of Ballyclare Secondary School for dealing with suspected malpractice and breaches of security in the examinations process in accordance with the requirements of JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures.

This policy deals with suspected candidate malpractice and suspected centre staff malpractice.

Malpractice

JCQ define malpractice as:

“any act, default or practice which is a breach of the Regulations or which:

- gives rise to prejudice to candidates; and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications; and/or
- compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre”

Malpractice can occur in a range of circumstances:

- Intentional – incidents are carried out purposefully with the aim to give unfair advantage in an examination or assessment;
- Unintentional – incidents arise due to a lack of awareness, carelessness, or forgetfulness in applying regulations;
- Environmental – incidents occur as a result of circumstances which are beyond the control of the people involved (e.g. supervision of candidates is disrupted by an emergency alarm).

1. Candidate Malpractice

1.1 Examples of candidate malpractice (this list is not exhaustive):

- the alteration or falsification of any results document, including certificates;
- a breach of the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor, or the awarding body in relation to the examination or assessment rules and regulations;
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations or assessments;
- collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates, beyond what is permitted;
- copying from another candidate (including the use of technology to aid the copying);
- allowing work to be copied, e.g. posting work on social networking sites prior to an examination/assessment;
- the deliberate destruction of another candidate’s work;

- disruptive behaviour in the examination room or during an assessment session (including the use of offensive language);
- failing to report to the centre or awarding body the candidate having unauthorised access to assessment related information or sharing unauthorised assessment related information on-line;
- exchanging, obtaining, receiving, passing on information (or the attempt to) which could be assessment related by means of talking, electronic, written or non-verbal communication;
- making a false declaration of authenticity in relation to the authorship of controlled assessment, coursework, non-examination assessment or the contents of a portfolio;
- allowing others to assist in the production of controlled assessment, coursework, nonexamination assessment or assisting others in the production of controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment;
- the misuse, or the attempted misuse, of examination and assessment materials and resources (e.g. exemplar materials);
- being in possession of unauthorised confidential information about an examination or assessment;
- bringing into the examination room notes in the wrong format (where notes are permitted in examinations) or inappropriately annotated texts (in open book examinations);
- the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive, obscene, homophobic, transphobic, racist or sexist material in scripts, controlled assessments, coursework, non-examination assessments or portfolios;
- impersonation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another person to take one's place in an examination or an assessment;
- plagiarism: unacknowledged copying from, or reproduction of, the work of others or published sources or incomplete referencing;
- theft of another candidate's work;
- bringing into the examination room or assessment situation unauthorised material, for example: notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators (when prohibited), dictionaries (when prohibited), instruments which can capture a digital image, electronic dictionaries (when prohibited), translators, wordlists, glossaries, iPods, mobile phones, MP3/4 players, pagers, watches or other similar electronic devices;
- the unauthorised use of a memory stick or similar device where a candidate uses a word processor;
- facilitating malpractice on the part of other candidates;
- behaving in a manner so as to undermine the integrity of the examination.

1.2 Malpractice through the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools

AI use refers to the use of AI tools to obtain information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which lead towards qualifications. AI chatbots are AI tools which generate text in response to user prompts and questions.

AI misuse includes:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work submitted for assessment is no longer the student's own
- Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content
- Using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations
- Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information
- Incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools
- Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.

AI is permitted in certain coursework subjects; however, its use must be clearly referenced as the source of the information. Appropriate referencing is a means of demonstrating academic integrity and is key to maintaining the integrity of assessments. If a student uses an AI tool which provides details of the sources it has used in generating content, these sources must be verified by the student and referenced in their work in the normal way. Where an AI tool does not provide such details, students should ensure that they independently verify the AI-generated content – and then reference the sources they have used. In addition to the above, where students use AI, they must acknowledge its use and show clearly how they have used it.

All candidates have to sign a declaration to confirm the work submitted is their own and has not included any misuse of AI. There are serious penalties for a false declaration, including disqualification.

1.3 Avoiding committing malpractice

Candidates are informed of how to avoid malpractice through the following:

- All JCQ notices (Information for candidates, nonexamination assessments, coursework, on-screen tests, written examinations, social media, plagiarism) are emailed to candidates prior to assessments/examinations taking place.
- Candidates are informed about the required conditions under which the assessments are conducted, including warnings about the introduction of prohibited materials and devices into the assessments, and access to restricted resources.
- Candidates are aware of actions that constitute malpractice and the sanctions that can be imposed on those who commit malpractice.
- Candidates are aware of the sanctions of passing on or receiving (even if the information was not requested) confidential assessment materials. If a candidate receives confidential information, they must report it to a member of centre staff immediately.
- Candidates involved in examination clash arrangements are aware of appropriate behaviour during supervision, i.e. ensuring that candidates cannot pass on or receive information about the content of assessments, thereby, committing candidate malpractice.
- Candidates completing coursework or non-examination assessments are aware of the need for the work to be their own.

1.4 Dealing with Suspected Candidate Malpractice

a) Internally Marked NEA, Controlled Assessment or Portfolio Assignment

If a member of staff suspects a candidate of malpractice, the candidate will be informed and the allegations will be explained. The candidate will have the opportunity to give a statement before any final decision is made. If the candidate accepts that malpractice has occurred and has not yet signed a candidate declaration, they will be given the opportunity to repeat the assignment. If the malpractice is proven following the investigation, centre staff may decide to re-mark previous assignments and these could also be rejected if similar concerns are identified.

If malpractice is discovered after a candidate has signed a declaration this will be reported to the Awarding Body. This includes where AI misuse has been detected or suspected by the centre.

b) Externally Marked Examinations

If a member of staff suspects a candidate of malpractice during an externally marked examination, the candidate will be informed and an investigation will be undertaken by the Exams Officer.

All cases of suspected candidate malpractice will be reported to the Awarding Body in accordance with JCQ regulations and requirements.

As part of the investigation the candidate will be:

- informed of the allegation made against them
- informed what evidence there is to support the allegation
- informed of the possible consequences should the malpractice be proven
- given the opportunity to consider their response to the allegation
- given the opportunity to submit a written statement
- informed of the Awarding Body outcome
- informed of the applicable appeals procedure should a decision be made against them

1.5 **Sanctions for Candidate Malpractice**

Where a candidate has been reported to an Awarding Body for suspected malpractice which is subsequently proven, the following sanctions may be imposed:

- **Warning:** the candidate will be issued with a warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied
- **Loss of marks for a section:** the candidate loses all the marks gained for a discrete section of the work. A section may be part of a component or a single piece of controlled assessment if this consists of several items.
- **Loss of marks for a component:** the candidate loses all the marks gained for a component
- **Disqualification from a whole qualification:** The candidate is disqualified from the whole qualification taken in the exam series or academic year
- **Disqualification from all qualifications taken in the exam series:** If circumstances suggest, the above penalty may be applied to other qualifications
- **Candidate debarred:** The candidate is barred from entering one or more examinations for a set period of time. This penalty may be applied in conjunction with any of the other penalties above if the circumstances warrant it.

1.6 **Right to Appeal – Candidate Malpractice**

A candidate may appeal against sanctions imposed on them. Appeals will be made by the centre on behalf of a candidate and conducted in accordance with the JCQ Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures and Awarding Body Procedures.

2. Centre Staff Malpractice

2.1 Examples of centre staff malpractice (this list is not exhaustive):

- Breach of security
- Deception
- Improper assistance to candidates
- Failure to cooperate with an investigation
- Maladministration

2.2 Dealing with Suspected Staff Malpractice

Investigations into allegations will be coordinated by the Head of Centre, who will ensure the initial investigation is carried out within ten working days and in accordance with the JCQ regulations and requirements.

The investigation will involve establishing the full facts and circumstances of any alleged malpractice. It should not be assumed that because an allegation has been made, it is true. Where appropriate, the staff member concerned and any potential witnesses will be interviewed and their version of events recorded.

The member of staff will be:

- informed in writing of the allegation made against them
- informed what evidence there is to support the allegation
- informed of the possible consequences, should malpractice be proven
- given the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations
- given the opportunity to submit a written statement
- given the opportunity to seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if required)
- informed of the applicable appeals procedure, should a decision be made against them
- informed of the possibility that information relating to a serious case of malpractice will be shared with the relevant awarding body and may be shared with other awarding bodies, the regulators Ofqual, the police and/or relevant professional bodies

Where the Head of Centre is implicated in the alleged malpractice, the Board of Governors will work alongside the awarding body who will gather information for the investigation directly.

2.3 Sanctions for Centre Staff Malpractice

Where a member of staff has been reported to an Awarding Body for suspected malpractice which is subsequently proven, the following sanctions may be imposed:

- **Written warning:** the member of staff will be issued with a written warning stating that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied
- **Training:** the member of staff will be required, as a condition of future involvement in both internal and external assessments, to undertake specific training or mentoring, within a particular period of time, including a review process at the end of the training
- **Special conditions:** Impose special conditions on the future involvement in assessments by the member of staff
- **Suspension:** Bar the member of staff in all involvement in the administration of assessments for a set period of time
- **Dismissal:** Should the degree of malpractice be deemed gross professional misconduct; the member of staff could face dismissal from their post

2.4 Right to Appeal – Centre Staff Malpractice

The member of staff may appeal against sanctions imposed on them. Appeals will be conducted in accordance with JCQ regulations and requirements.