



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

MANAGING MALPRACTICE POLICY

POLICY REVIEWED APRIL 2025

Policy ratified at April, 2025

B of G Meeting

Introduction

This policy has been written in line with guidance from JCQ: Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice> and should be read in conjunction with Ballymena Academy External Examinations Policy.

Members of staff should also refer to the Staff Guidance issued on :-

- A.I. Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
- Plagiarism in Assessments
- Authentication and the Examination Compliance Notices for pupils.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's examinations process to read, understand and implement this policy. Members of staff involved with examinations should be fully conversant with all JCQ regulations and are recommended to consult the relevant documents.

Definition of 'Malpractice'

JCQ defines malpractice as: 'Malpractice', which includes maladministration and non-compliance with the Regulations, means any act, default or practice which is a breach of the Regulations or which:

- 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. Failure by a centre to notify, investigate and report to an awarding body all allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice in itself. Also, failure to take action as required by an awarding body, as detailed in this document, or to co-operate with an awarding body's investigation, constitutes malpractice.

JCQ also states:

Instances of malpractice arise for a variety of reasons:

- some incidents are intentional and aim to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment;
- some incidents arise due to ignorance of the regulations, carelessness or forgetfulness in applying the regulations;
- Some occur as a direct result of the force of circumstances which are beyond the control of those involved.

Definitions of Malpractice:

Centre Staff Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by Centre staff. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered and acted upon :-

- moving the time or date of a fixed examination (beyond that permitted) without notifying the relevant Awarding Body;
- failing to keep examination papers secure prior to the examination;
- obtaining unauthorised access to examination material prior to an examination;
- assisting candidates in the production of coursework, beyond that permitted by the regulations;
- allowing candidates unsupervised access to coursework exemplar material, whether this is the work of former students or that provided by the Awarding Body;
- failing to keep student computer files secure;
- assisting or prompting candidates with the production of answers.

Candidate Malpractice

The following are examples of malpractice by candidates. The list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered and acted upon :-

- misuse of examination material;
- behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the examination;
- failing to abide by the instructions or advice of an invigilator, supervisor or the Awarding Body in relation to the examination rules and regulations;
- failing to abide by the conditions of supervision designed to maintain the security of the examinations;
- disruptive behaviour in the examination room (including the use of offensive language);
- introduction of unauthorised material into the examination room e.g. notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar devices and watches;
- introducing into the examination room notes in the wrong format (when notes are permitted) or incorrectly annotated texts (in open book examinations);
- obtaining, receiving, exchanging or passing on information which could be examination related (or the attempt to) by means of talking or written paper/notes;
- personation: pretending to be someone else, arranging for another to take one's place in an examination.;
- the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in scripts or coursework;
- copying from another candidate (including the misuse of ICT to do so);
- collusion: working collaboratively with other candidates;
- plagiarism: the failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own;
- theft of another's work;
- the deliberate destruction of another's work;
- the alteration of any results documents, including certificates.

Preventing Malpractice

Ballymena Academy takes all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice.

To ensure internally and externally set examinations are carried out in accordance with JCQ Guidelines and meets the statutory responsibilities of Examination Centres the school has in place the following Team:

- Principal (Head of Centre for Examinations)
- Vice-Principal : Curriculum, Assessment, Learning and Teaching
- Vice-Principal : Corporate Services
- Deputy Principal: Pastoral Care
- Examinations Officer and Assistant Examinations Officer
- Learning Support and Assistant Learning Support Coordinator
- Heads of Year and Heads of Department/ Subject.

Examples of preventative measures :-

- staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance;
- the Examinations Officer is appropriately trained, resourced and supported;
- exams are conducted in accordance with JCQ requirements;
- staff who manage and implement special consideration and access arrangements are aware of the requirements and are appropriately supported and resourced;
- Ballymena Academy has a culture of honesty and openness so that any concerns of potential malpractice can be escalated appropriately without fear of repercussion;

- relevant JCQ notices, e.g. Information for candidates, non-examination assessments, coursework, on-screen tests, written examinations, social media, plagiarism are distributed to candidates prior to assessments/examinations taking place;
- candidates are informed verbally and in writing 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 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 and are issued with the relevant JCQ documents for candidates. Candidates are provided with clear instructions on how to avoid plagiarism(including AI misuse).

Identification and Reporting of Malpractice

In accordance with JCQ regulations the Head of Centre must:

- notify the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice. The only exception to this is candidate malpractice discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments (not including timed assessment for Art and Design) before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate (see paragraph section on ‘Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component’ and procedures outlined in appendix 1). If staff malpractice is discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments, the Head of Centre must inform the awarding body immediately, regardless of whether the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate(s);
- report malpractice using the appropriate forms :
 - JCQ/M1 to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice.
 - JCQ/M2 to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration.
- be accountable for ensuring that the centre and centre staff comply at all times with the awarding body’s instructions regarding an investigation;
- ensure that if it is necessary to delegate the gathering of information to a senior member of centre staff, the awarding body’s agreement is obtained, and the senior member of centre staff chosen is independent and not connected to the department or candidate involved in the suspected malpractice. The Head of Centre should ensure there is no conflict of interest (see information on ‘Conflict of Interests’ below) which might compromise the investigation;
- respond speedily and openly to all requests for an investigation into an allegation of malpractice. This will be in the best interests of centre staff, candidates and any others involved;
- make information requested by an awarding body available speedily and openly;
- co-operate with an enquiry into an allegation of malpractice and ensure that their staff do so also, whether the centre is directly involved in the case or not;
- ensure staff members and candidates are informed of their individual responsibilities and rights as set out in JCQ guidance ;
- forward any awarding body correspondence and evidence to centre staff and/or provide staff contact information to enable the awarding body to do so;
- at all times comply with data protection law;
- pass on to the individuals concerned any warnings or notifications of sanctions and ensure compliance with any requests made by the awarding body as a result of a malpractice case.

Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component.

Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication need not be reported to the awarding body but must be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. The only exception to this is where an awarding body's confidential assessment material has potentially been breached. The breach must be reported to the awarding body immediately.

If, at the time of the incident, a candidate has not been entered with an awarding body for the component, unit or qualification, malpractice discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment can also be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures.

Centres should not normally give credit for any work submitted which is not the candidate's own work. If any improper assistance has been given, a note must be made of this on the cover sheet of the candidate's work or other appropriate place. Where malpractice by a candidate in a vocational qualification is discovered prior to the work being submitted for certification, centres should refer to the guidance provided by the awarding body.

If coursework, controlled assessment, non-examination assessment or portfolio work which is submitted for internal assessment is rejected by the centre on grounds of malpractice, candidates have the right to appeal against this decision. The JCQ website contains advice on the recommended procedures for appeals against internal assessment decisions.

The school's procedure for investigating suspected malpractice in relation to controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component is detailed in appendix 1

Conflicts of interest

In all cases, the Head of Centre must confirm to the awarding body the identity of the individual who will gather information and that the individual is appropriately senior, experienced in conducting similar types of investigations and that their appointment will not create a conflict of interest. The awarding body will confirm whether or not they agree to the suggested information-gatherer. A conflict of interest would arise where:

- the information-gatherer has direct line management responsibility for any of the accused individuals;
- the information-gatherer has overall responsibility for the area of work subject to the investigation;
- the information-gatherer has a relationship, beyond the working relationship, with any of the accused individuals;
- the above do not apply but there is or could be a perception that the individual would have a conflict of interest. and are not therefore an appropriate information-gatherer.

In the event of any concerns regarding conflicts of interest, or the suitability of the potential information-gatherer, the head of centre must contact the awarding body as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

Conducting an investigation into suspected malpractice

All cases of malpractice are reported to the Examinations Officer and/or a Vice-Principal who will inform the Head of Centre.

In conducting an investigation into allegations of suspected malpractice the school will adhere to the procedures defined in the JCQ document 'Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures'.

Appendix 1:

Suspected Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component

For detailed guidance on dealing with suspected malpractice you should refer to the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures* – www.jcq.org.uk/esams_office/malpractice/

In the context of controlled / coursework assessment, candidates must not:

- submit work which is not their own;
- lend work to other candidates or allow other candidates to copy their work;
- allow other candidates to have access to their own independently sourced material;
- assist other candidates to produce work;
- use books, the internet, computer-generated content (such as AI Chatbot), other sources without acknowledgement or attribution;
- submit work that has been word processed by a third party without acknowledgement.

Under what circumstances must a centre notify an awarding body of suspected malpractice?

Irregularities identified by the centre **prior** to the candidate signing the authentication statement

- The centre should deal with the irregularity under its own internal procedures.
- There is no requirement to report the irregularity to the awarding body.
- Details of any work which is not the candidate's own must be recorded on the record form.

Irregularities identified by the centre **subsequent** to the candidate signing the authentication statement.

- The head of centre must notify the relevant awarding body at the earliest opportunity using **Form JCQ/M1**.
- The awarding body will apply a penalty.

Irregularities identified by an examiner or moderator **subsequent** to the candidate signing the authentication statement

- The awarding body will ask the head of centre to conduct a full investigation and report his/her findings.

Penalties for breaking the regulations

If a breach of the regulations is discovered **after** a candidate has signed the authentication statement, the awarding body will apply **one** of the following penalties:

- the piece of work will be awarded zero marks;
- the candidate will be disqualified from that unit/component for that examination series;
- the candidate will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- the candidate will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from re-entering for a period of time.

Irregularities identified by the centre prior to the candidate signing the authentication statement:-

Where there is strong evidence which suggests that a pupil's Controlled / Coursework Assessment may have been copied, or that unauthorised collaboration has taken place:-

- the suspicion is reported to and discussed with the Head of Department.

If the Head of Department agrees that the evidence gives cause for concern, then:-

- she/he discusses the matter with the pupil(s) involved, in the presence of the class teacher.

If the Head of Department and the class teacher feel that there has been malpractice, then the matter should be reported to a Vice-Principal, who will carry out an investigation :-

- discuss the matter with pupil(s)
- gather information
- collect statements from relevant parties (statements must be in the individual's own words and be signed and dated)
- keep a record of interviews

and, where appropriate, initiate the following:-

- the piece of Controlled Assessment / Coursework or unit/section of Controlled Assessment/ Coursework, in question, will be withdrawn and zero-rated;
- the pupil's parents will be informed;
- where time and circumstances permit, the pupil may be set another coursework task which may be completed in after-school detention, as required;
- the pupil will be given a Head of Department Detention;
- the incident will be recorded in the pupil's record file;
- the pupil will be asked about the validity of all other pieces of work submitted.

Lending Controlled / Coursework Assessment work

- Pupils who lend their Controlled / Coursework Assessment work to others or are involved in unauthorised collaboration; having been advised against doing so, will normally be given a verbal warning and a Head of Department Detention.
- Where there is a lack of clarity about which party was responsible for copying/lending, and those concerned refuse to assist with enquiries, the procedures relating to copying Controlled / Coursework Assessment will be applied to both parties.

Re-offending

- Should a pupil re-offend, having already been disciplined for Controlled /Coursework Assessment malpractice, the work in question will be withdrawn and he/she will not normally be given the opportunity to complete a new task.

Failure to meet, interim and/or final, internal Controlled / Coursework Assessment deadlines

- Staff should follow existing procedures, as defined in Ballymena Academy Procedures for Classroom Management : Promoting Positive Behaviour, for dealing with pupils who fail to meet homework deadlines.
- When a pupil appears in Head of Department Detention because of issues relating to Controlled/ Coursework Assessment, he/she may be detained after school, as required, until the task is completed. Parents will be notified, in writing, and, when and where appropriate, they will be invited to discuss the matter.