



MANAGING MALPRACTICE POLICY

Belfast High School

Date: February 2025

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Ratified by: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Board of Governors

Author: Principal

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Summary

This policy provides an overview of the arrangements for managing malpractice in external examinations and non-examination assessments.

Purpose

This policy covers all qualifications delivered by the School and its purpose is to ensure that all staff and pupils:

- are aware of what constitutes malpractice;
- understand how to prevent it occurring so that they can actively take steps to prevent it; and where malpractice does occur, take prompt action to report it.

This policy outlines how pupils are informed of and advised on how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations / assessments, and how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the School and reported to the relevant awarding body.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the exam processes to read, understand and implement the policy.

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 the School's External Examinations Policy.

Members of staff should also refer to regular updates on examination regulations from the Examinations Officer.

Pupils should also refer to the Examination Compliance Notices posted in the Examinations Google Classroom.

JCQ defines malpractice (including maladministration) as 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. Also, failure to act 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 (eg a fire alarm sounds, and the examination is disrupted).

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.

Response to allegations of suspected malpractice

Belfast High School investigates allegations of malpractice swiftly and thoroughly. Such investigations would be led by the Head of Centre (the Principal) and a full written report of any case then submitted to the relevant examination board.

JCQ has its own policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of malpractice and our school adheres to these 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-exam assessments before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate. In this case the incident will be dealt with through the School's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Complete Form JCQ/M1 (suspected candidate malpractice) or Form JCQ/M2 (suspected malpractice/maladministration involving centre staff) to notify the awarding body whose qualifications are involved in an incident of malpractice. These forms are available on the JCQ website;
- Supervise personally, and as directed by the awarding body, all investigations resulting from an allegation of malpractice unless the investigation is being led by the awarding body or another party;
- Ensure that if it is necessary to delegate an investigation to a senior member of centre staff, 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 which can otherwise 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;
- Speedily and openly make available information as requested by an awarding body;
- Co-operate, and ensure their staff do so, with an enquiry into an allegation of malpractice, whether the centre is directly involved in the case or not;
- Inform staff members and candidates of their individual responsibilities and rights as set out in these guidelines;
- Forward any awarding body correspondence and evidence to centre staff and/or provide staff contact information to enable the awarding body to do so;
- Pass on to the individuals concerned any warnings or notifications of penalties and ensure compliance with any requests made by the awarding body as a result of a malpractice case;
- Provide a full written report of the investigation to the Awarding Body using Form JCQ/M1 (candidate malpractice) or Form JCQ/M2 (centre staff maladministration/malpractice).

Examples of Potential 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 non-exam assessments, beyond that permitted by the regulations;
- Allowing candidates unsupervised access to non-exam assessment 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 eg notes, study guides and personal organisers, own blank paper, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), 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 offensive comments, obscenities, or drawings; discriminatory language, remarks or drawings directed at an individual or group in scripts or non-exam assessments.
- 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, or work completed using AI, 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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils, and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT. Belfast High School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Pupils must clearly reference any AI tools used in the production of their work and it must be used in a way that is acceptable within each specification. Where AI is used as a research tool, all AI-generated content must be properly attributed.

Staff should be aware that AI tools are still being developed and should use such tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate, or biased content.

Staff must make pupils aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments.

For more information on AI misuse, see JCQ's 'AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications'.

Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.

Procedures for Informing Candidates of Awarding Bodies' Regulations

All candidates are directed to the Awarding Bodies' regulations regarding non-exam assessments and examinations which are uploaded in the Examinations Google Classroom. During the course of the examination period, notices are displayed both in the area immediately outside the examination room and on display in the examination area.

Verbal Announcements

Before the beginning of every examination, candidates are given a verbal reinforcement of the Awarding Body's regulations. In addition, candidates are given the opportunity to hand in mobile phones or other unauthorised materials that are held securely until the end of the examination.

Procedures for Investigating Alleged Malpractice

All cases of malpractice are reported to the Examinations Officer who will inform the Head of Centre. The Examinations Officer will obtain written statements from those concerned, whether the malpractice is by members of staff or candidates.

Investigations by the School into alleged malpractice by candidates

The Examinations Officer will conduct a full enquiry into the malpractice in conjunction with the Head of Centre. If malpractice is deemed to have taken place, then a full written report (using Form JCQ/M1 where appropriate) is submitted to the Awarding Body with supporting evidence.

- Candidates accused of malpractice are made fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice, and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven. The parents/guardians of the candidates are also notified - preferably in writing - of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences;
- Candidates accused of malpractice must be given the opportunity to respond (preferably in writing) to allegations made;
- Candidates accused of malpractice should be made aware of the avenues for appealing should a judgement be made against him or her. Full details of an Awarding Body's appeals procedure will be sent to the candidate and parents/guardians if the judgement goes against the candidate;
- The candidate and parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the outcome of the Awarding Body's decision.

Investigations by the School into alleged malpractice by members of staff

- Investigations into any case of malpractice or irregularities against a member of staff must normally be carried out in the first instance by the Head of Centre of the School, in conjunction with the Awarding Body;
- Investigations into alleged malpractice or irregularities against the Head of Centre must be carried out by the Chair of the Board of Governors and reported to the Awarding Body when completed;
- Any member of staff accused of malpractice or irregularities must be made fully aware (preferably in writing) at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice, and the possible consequences should malpractice be proven;
- Any member of staff accused of malpractice or irregularities must have the opportunity to respond (preferably in writing) to allegations made;
- Any member of staff accused of malpractice or irregularities must be made aware of the avenues for appealing should a judgement go against him or her;
- When investigating serious cases or alleged staff malpractice, it may be necessary for a member of the Awarding Body staff to be present at an interview with the staff member concerned. The member of staff being interviewed may be accompanied by a friend or union representative;

- In accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice and the Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a report on cases where members of staff are found to have committed malpractice, together with details of the action taken by the Head of Centre, the Board of Governors must be forwarded to the regulatory authorities and may be made available to other Awarding Bodies if the Awarding Body decides that the circumstances of the case are sufficiently serious to warrant such reports being made.

Reports

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, acting on behalf of the Awarding Body, to submit a full written report of any investigation and to provide the following where appropriate:

- A statement of the facts, a detailed account of the circumstances and details of any investigations carried out by the Centre;
- Written statement(s) from the invigilators or other staff concerned;
- Written statements from the candidate(s) concerned;
- Any mitigating factors (eg relevant medical reports);
- Information about the School's procedures for advising candidates of the Awarding Bodies' regulations;
- Seating plans;
- Unauthorised material found in the examination room;
- Any work of the candidate and any associated material (eg source material for non-exam assessments) which is relevant to the investigation;
- The relevant form, JCQ/M1 for candidate malpractice or JCQ/M2 for centre staff malpractice, should be used as the basis of the report.

Related Policies

External Examinations Policy

Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy