

Belfast Royal Academy

per vias sapientiae



Managing Malpractice Policy
(to include Controlled Assessment
and BTEC)

2026 - 2027

Title	Managing Examinations Malpractice Policy
Summary	This policy provides an overview of arrangements pertaining to examinations. This policy should be read in conjunction with the AI Policy.
Purpose	To ensure the planning and management of examinations is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of all candidates. To ensure the operation of an efficient examination system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.
Operational Date	August 2026
Next Review Date	August 2027
Author	Vice Principal (School Organisation) and Examinations Officer

To be posted on School website	Yes
Date posted (if applicable)	August 2026

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 Belfast Royal Academy policy for External Examinations Policy.

All staff have a responsibility for reporting any potential malpractice that they may identify. Members of staff should also refer to the Staff Guidance issued on A.I. Plagiarism and Authentication and the Examination Compliance Notices for pupils.

Belfast Royal Academy believes malpractice is deemed to be those actions and practices which threaten the integrity of public examinations, and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting them.

JCQ define 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 (e.g. 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. 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 (Named Head of Centre for Examinations) – ARA
- Vice Principal – Quality of Education Achievement (oversight of KS4 Examinations) – WG
- Examinations Officer – CB
- Assistant Examinations Officer – CGN
- ICT Manager – JRC
- Learning Support Co-ordinators – KEB, JMN

Reporting suspected malpractice

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it to:

- Principal (Named Head of Centre for Examinations) – ARA
- Vice Principal – Quality of Education Achievement (oversight of KS4 Examinations) – WG
- Examinations Officer – CB

Response to allegations of suspected malpractice

Belfast Royal Academy investigates allegations of malpractice swiftly and thoroughly. Such investigation 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 including:

- A statement of the facts; a detailed account of the circumstances of the alleged malpractice and detail of any investigation carried out by the centre
- The evidence relevant to the allegation; such as written statement(s) from the invigilator(s), assessor, internal verifier(s), or other staff who are involved
- Written statement(s) from the candidate(s)
- Any exculpatory evidence and/or mitigating factors
- Information about the school's procedures for advising candidates of examination board regulations
- Seating plans showing the exact position of candidates in the examination room
- Any unauthorised material found in the examination room
- Any of the candidate's work and associated material, e.g. relevant source material for coursework

JCQ has its own policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of malpractice and our school adheres to these. 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 nonexamination assessments before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate. 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);
- complete Form JCQ/M1 (suspected candidate malpractice) or Form JCQ/M2a (suspected malpractice/maladministration involving centre staff) to notify the awarding body/bodies whose qualifications are involved in an incident of malpractice. Each form is available from the JCQ website <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice> Malpractice - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications Notifications in letter format will be accepted providing the information given covers the same points as Form JCQ/M1 or JCQ/M2a;
- 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.

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 pupils or that provided by the Awarding Body.
- Failing to keep pupil 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.
- Misuse of AI tools.
- Theft of another's work.
- The deliberate destruction of another's work.
- The alteration of any results documents, including certificates.

Procedures for informing candidates of Awarding Bodies' regulations

All candidates receive a copy of the Awarding Bodies' regulations regarding coursework and examinations. 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 that are kept securely outside of the examination room 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.

Investigation by the Belfast Royal Academy 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 JCGQ/M/01 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 be 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.

Investigation 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 School's Governing Body, or the responsible employer, 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 Governing Body or the responsible employer 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 an 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. source material for coursework) which is relevant to the investigation.
- The form JCGQ/M/01 should be used as the basis of the report.

Improper Assistance

Centre staff are not permitted to give improper assistance to any candidate in line with Appendix 2 within the guidance from JCQ: Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments. If any improper assistance has been given, this must be reported to the Head of Centre who will then inform the awarding body, as per section 4.1.3 of the JCQ guidelines, and a note will be made of this on the cover sheet of the candidate's work or other appropriate place.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offence in the context of examinations. Advice will always be given to pupils that:

- Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. It is very important that you give credit where it is due.
- How can pupils avoid plagiarism?

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use:

- another person's idea, opinion or theory
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings – any pieces of information that
- are not common knowledge
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words
- paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.

Plagiarism and the internet

The internet has become a more popular source of information for student papers, and many questions have arisen about how to avoid plagiarising these sources. In most cases, the same rules apply as to a printed source: when a writer must refer to ideas or a quote from a website, they must cite that source.

If a writer wants to use visual information from a website, many of the same rules apply. Copying visual information or graphics from a website (or from a printed source) is very similar to quoting information, and the source of the visual information or graphic must be cited. These rules also apply to other uses of textual or visual information from websites – for example, if a pupil is constructing a web page as a class project, and copies graphics or visual from other sites, they must also provide details about the source of this information. In this case, it might be a good idea to obtain permission from the website's owner before using the graphics.

Strategies for Avoiding Plagiarism

- Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text, especially when taking notes.
- Paraphrase, but make sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. Read over what you want to paraphrase carefully: cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you cannot see any of it (and so are not tempted to use the text as a 'guide'). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking.

- Check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.
- Using someone else's ideas, but putting them in your own words. This is probably the skill you will use most when incorporating sources into your writing. Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you must still acknowledge the source of the information.
- Reference all sources appropriately in line with instructions from your class teacher in terms of providing the following information as appropriate:
 1. Author (the person or organisation responsible for the textbook/article/website)
 2. Year (date printed, created or last updated)
 3. Title
 4. For websites only - accessed date (the date site was viewed) and URL or Internet address.

AI Use in Assessments leading to Qualifications (*please also refer to AI Policy*)

What is AI?

AI use in this context refers to the use of AI tools to obtain information and content which might be used in work produced for assessments which contributes to the award of qualifications.

When properly referenced, this can be acceptable, although pupils cannot be credited for any work they produce for assessment which is not their own so the benefit to them of using AI is likely to be limited and they risk committing malpractice if AI is misused.

The risks of using AI

Misuse of AI tools in relation to qualification assessments at any time constitutes malpractice. It is important teachers and pupils are aware that AI tools are expanding quickly but there are limitations to their use, such as producing inaccurate or inappropriate content.

The use of AI may pose significant risks if used by pupils completing qualification assessments, not least the risk of committing malpractice, for which serious sanctions can apply. AI tools have been developed to produce responses based upon the statistical likelihood of the language selected being an appropriate response and so the responses cannot be relied upon. AI tools often produce answers which may seem convincing but contain incorrect or biased information. Some AI tools have been identified as providing answers to questions that can prompt inappropriate actions, and some can also produce fake references to books/articles.

What is AI misuse?

As has always been the case, and in accordance with section 5.3(k) of the JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/>), pupils and private candidates must submit work for assessments which is their own.

Pupil work submitted for assessment must be in their own words and not copied or paraphrased from another source such as an AI tool and must reflect their own independent work. Pupils must demonstrate their own knowledge, skills and understanding as required for the qualification in question and set out in the qualification specification. This includes demonstrating their performance in relation to the assessment objectives for the subject relevant to the question/s or other tasks pupils have been set.

It is important pupils develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they are studying and do not rely on AI.

Pupils must be able to demonstrate that the final submission is the product of their own independent work and independent thinking.

AI misuse is where a pupil has used one or more AI tools but has not appropriately acknowledged this use and has submitted work for assessment when it is not their own.

Examples of AI misuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work submitted for assessment is no longer the pupil'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 pupil'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.

How AI misuse will be treated as malpractice

AI misuse constitutes malpractice as defined in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>). The malpractice sanctions available for the offences of 'making a false declaration of authenticity' and 'plagiarism' include disqualification and debarment from taking qualifications for a number of years. Pupils' marks may also be affected if they have relied on AI to complete an assessment and, as noted above, the attainment that they have demonstrated in relation to the requirements of the qualification does not accurately reflect their own work.

When AI might be used?

Please refer to the Appropriate Uses of AI in School (for Pupils) section of the AI policy.

How AI should be acknowledged?

It is essential that pupils are clear about the importance of referencing the sources they have used when producing work for an assessment, and that they know how to do this. Appropriate referencing is a means of demonstrating academic integrity and is key to maintaining the integrity of assessments.

If a pupil uses an AI tool which provides details of the sources it has used in generating content, these sources must be verified by the pupil and referenced in their work in the normal way. Where an AI tool does not provide such details, pupils should ensure that they independently verify the AI-generated content – and then reference the sources they have used.

Pupils acknowledging the use of AI and showing clearly how they have used it allows teachers and assessors to review how AI has been used and whether the use was appropriate in the context of the particular assessment. This is particularly important given that AI-generated content is not subject to the same academic scrutiny as other published sources.

Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, a pupil's acknowledgement must show the name of the AI source used and should show the date the content was generated. For example:

The pupil must, retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes, in a noneditable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used. This must be submitted with the work the pupil submits for assessment, so the teacher/assessor is able to review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used.

This must be included with the work the pupil submits for assessment, so the teacher/assessor is able to review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used. If this is not submitted, but the teacher/assessor suspects that the pupil has used AI tools, the teacher/assessor will need to consult the centre's malpractice policy for appropriate next steps and must take action to assure themselves the work is the pupil's own. Where the teacher/assessor cannot assure themselves, they must follow their centre's internal procedures and the published guidance for assessment.

Other actions which should be considered in relation to acknowledging AI use are:

- a) Pupils are reminded, as with any source, poor referencing, paraphrasing and copying sections of text may constitute malpractice, and could attract severe sanctions including disqualification. In the context of AI use, pupils must be clear what is, and what is not, acceptable in respect of acknowledging AI content and the use of AI sources. For example, it would be unacceptable to simply reference 'AI' or 'ChatGPT', just as it would be unacceptable to state 'Google' rather than the specific website and webpages which have been consulted;
- b) Pupils are also reminded if they use AI they have not independently met the marking criteria therefore they will not be rewarded.

Private candidates

As with internal candidates, the Head of Centre is responsible for having arrangements in place to ensure that students' centre-assessed work is produced, authenticated and marked, in accordance with the awarding bodies' instructions. This applies to all candidates, including private candidates.

Verifying the authenticity of work submitted by private candidates can be more challenging Belfast Royal Academy as a centre, as we may not have a good understanding of the standard the candidate is currently working at.

Before accepting entries from a private candidate for a subject that includes NEA or coursework, we must ensure the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own independent work. This may involve requiring the candidate to undertake some of the work under supervision, a review of the candidate's portfolio of evidence across a range of qualifications and a short discussion with the candidate regarding their work.

We reserve the right to reject a private candidate entering a qualification in our centre because of the difficulties in ascertaining this.