

# Blackfen School for Girls



## Examinations Policy

### Malpractice

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	Date	Name	Signature
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# Examinations policy: Malpractice Policy

## Rationale

The Malpractice Policy covers all qualifications delivered by Blackfen School and details how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations and assessments; and how suspected malpractice issues are escalated and reported to the relevant awarding body. Blackfen School follows the guidance of JCQ in all cases of suspected and actual malpractice.

Leaders and teachers of BTEC courses should refer to the school's BTEC Policy to see the specific actions to be taken in line with any issues relating to malpractice or maladministration in the delivery of BTEC courses.

## I – Introduction

### What is malpractice and maladministration?

'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are related concepts, the common theme of which is that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and its associated procedures uses the word 'malpractice' to cover both 'malpractice' and 'maladministration' and it means any act, default or practice which is:

- a breach of the Regulations
- a breach of awarding body requirements regarding how a qualification should be delivered
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification
- which:
  - gives rise to prejudice to candidates
  - compromises public confidence in qualifications
  - compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate
  - damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding body or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre

### Candidate malpractice

'Candidate malpractice' means malpractice by a candidate in connection with any examination or assessment, including the preparation and authentication of any controlled assessments, coursework or non-examination assessments, the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the writing of any examination paper.

### Centre staff malpractice

'Centre staff malpractice' means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor (whether employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services) or a volunteer at a centre; or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by a centre such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe

## **Suspected malpractice**

For the purposes of this document, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice.

## **Purpose of the policy**

To confirm Blackfen School for Girls: has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually, a written malpractice policy which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre detailing how candidates are informed and advised to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments, how suspected malpractice issues should be escalated within the centre and reported to the relevant awarding body; it must also acknowledge the use of AI [e.g. what AI is, when it may be used and how it should be acknowledged, the risks of using AI, what AI misuse is and how this will be treated as malpractice].

## **2. General principles**

In accordance with JCQ regulations, Blackfen School will:

- Take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after examinations have taken place
- Inform the awarding body immediately of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation.
- As required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures* and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require

## **3. Preventing malpractice**

Blackfen School has in place:

- Robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures*.
- This includes ensuring that all staff involved in the delivery of assessments and examinations understand the requirements for conducting these as specified in the following JCQ documents and any further awarding body guidance:
  - General Regulations for Approved Centres 2025-2026
  - Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2025-2026
  - Instructions for conducting coursework 2025-2026
  - Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2025-2026
  - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026
  - A guide to the special consideration process 2025-2026
  - Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2025-2026 [this document]
  - Plagiarism in Assessments
  - AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications; A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2025-2026
  - Post Results Services (Enquiries About Results and Appeals)

## **Informing and advising candidates**

Subject Leaders inform candidates before starting coursework and/or NEA assessment about specific actions that constitute malpractice in their subject assessed tasks; the actions taken by the school to address any identified form of malpractice (in line with JCQ regulations) and the information provided by JCQ about malpractice in the 'Examinations Information' section of the school website. This information is repeated in Assemblies and in other events such as the Year 10 and Year 11 Information Evenings.

In addition to these actions, the Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum) advises parents and carers in writing, at the start of Year 10 and Year 12, about the consequences of malpractice identified in coursework, NEA tasks or in any public examination setting. Parents and carers are directed to this policy and to the same information provided by JCQ about malpractice in the 'Examinations Information' section of the school website.

## **Use of AI in assessments**

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. While the range of AI tools, and their capabilities, is likely to expand greatly in the near future, misuse of AI tools in relation to qualification assessments at any time constitutes malpractice. Teachers and students should also be aware that AI tools are evolving quickly but there are still limitations to their use, such as producing inaccurate or inappropriate content.

AI chatbots are AI tools which generate text in response to user prompts and questions. Users can ask follow-up questions or ask the chatbot to revise the responses already provided. AI chatbots respond to prompts based upon patterns in the data sets (large language model) upon which they have been trained. They generate responses which are statistically likely to be relevant and appropriate. AI chatbots can complete tasks such as the following:

- Answering questions
- Analysing, improving, and summarising text
- Authoring essays, articles, fiction, and non-fiction
- Writing computer code
- Translating text from one language to another
- Generating new ideas, prompts, or suggestions for a given topic or theme
- Generating text with specific attributes, such as tone, sentiment, or formality

The use of AI chatbots may pose significant risks if used by students completing qualification assessments. As noted above, they 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 chatbots often produce answers which may seem convincing but contain incorrect or biased information. Some AI chatbots have been identified as providing dangerous and harmful answers to questions and some can also produce fake references to books/ articles by real or fake people.

## What is AI Misuse?

AI misuse constitutes malpractice as defined in the JCQ 'Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures'. 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. Students' 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.

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

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work 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.

## Acknowledging AI Use

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. This allows teachers and assessors to review how AI has been used and whether that 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 student's acknowledgement must show the name of the AI source used and should show the date the content was generated. For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>), 25/01/2024. The student must retain a copy of the question(s) and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes, in a non-editable format [such as a screenshot] and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used.

This must be submitted with the work the student submits for assessment, so the teacher/assessor is able to review the work, the AI-generated content and how it has been used. Where this is not submitted, and the teacher/assessor suspects that the student has used AI tools, the teacher/assessor will need to consult this policy for appropriate next steps and should take action to assure themselves that the work is the student's own. Further guidance on ways this could be done are set out in the JCQ 'Plagiarism in Assessments' guidance document. The school has invested in digital checking tools and filters but the teacher's word is final. If the teacher does not believe that the work presented is the student's own work, then a malpractice investigation will be implemented, as explained in Section 4 of this policy.

Students may not use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Students may use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed
- Where a student uses an AI tool, the student should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated responses. Students must submit this information along with the assessment.

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
- Make students 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 the JCQ publication *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*. Any misuse of AI tools may be treated as malpractice.

#### **4. Identification and reporting of malpractice**

Once suspected malpractice is identified, the following process should be followed to investigate and report it:

- The Headteacher will notify the appropriate awarding body immediately of all alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, using the appropriate forms, and will conduct any investigation and gathering of information in accordance with the requirements of the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures*. At all times, the student and their parent/carer will be informed of the progress of the investigation.
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of candidate malpractice. Form JCQ/M2 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of suspected staff malpractice/maladministration. Form JCQ/M3 will be used to notify an awarding body of an incident of actual staff malpractice/maladministration.
- 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 will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. The only exception to this is where the awarding body's confidential assessment material has potentially been breached. The breach will be reported to the awarding body immediately.
- If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence to implicate an individual in malpractice, that individual (a candidate or a member of staff) will be informed of the rights of accused individuals.
- Once the information gathering has concluded, the Headteacher (or other appointed information-gatherer) will submit a written report summarising the information obtained and actions taken to the relevant awarding body, accompanied by the information obtained during the course of their enquiries.

- The awarding body will decide on the basis of the report, and any supporting documentation, whether there is evidence of malpractice and if any further investigation is required. The Headteacher will be informed accordingly.

## **Procedures for dealing with student malpractice – Internally assessed units**

### **Stage One**

The **Subject Leader** must be informed of the malpractice with accompanying evidence. A thorough investigation will be undertaken by the **teacher** and the **Subject Leader** will speak to the student, giving them opportunity to respond to the allegations made. The student will also be advised of the appeals process if the allegation is proven.

In cases where plagiarism and /or misuse of AI is proven the **Subject Leader** and **teacher** will give the student a verbal warning. The submitted work will be cancelled and the student will be given the opportunity to amend the work and re-submit it within a given timescale. A signed student declaration form must be attached to the re-submitted work. Details of the meeting and the sanctions applied will be formally recorded and a copy saved on the student record. Parents/carers will be informed.

In cases of serious malpractice which are proven, and where the breach is of a serious magnitude, the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** must be informed and parents/carers must be invited to a meeting with the **teacher**, the **Subject Leader** and **Faculty Leader** to discuss the seriousness of the offence. The student will be given a verbal warning which will be formally recorded. The submitted work will be cancelled and the student will be given the opportunity to amend the work and re-submit it within a given timescale. Details of the meeting and the sanctions applied will be formally recorded and a copy saved on the student record. If malpractice or serious malpractice is proven the student will receive a school sanction to be decided by the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** which can include internal suspension. The process will be documented by the **Subject Leader**.

### **Stage Two**

If the student fails to remove the plagiarised material or re-submits work which contains further plagiarised content which is proven following investigation by the **teacher** and the **Subject Leader**, then parents/carers will be invited to the school and the student will be given a final warning. The **Faculty Leader** and **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** will also attend this meeting. The student will also be given one final opportunity to re-submit the work. A signed student declaration must be attached to the re-submitted work. The student will receive a serious school sanction to be decided by the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** which can include internal suspension. The process will be documented by the **Subject Leader** and a copy saved on the student record.

### **Stage Three**

Should the situation remain unresolved, the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** will inform the **Headteacher** and a further investigation will follow. Consequences will depend on the outcome of the investigation but if the malpractice is proven and the student has failed to remove the plagiarised content then this may result in the student being withdrawn from the course and the malpractice being reported to

the exam board. All stages of the Investigation will be documented and the student will be advised of the appeals procedure. Parents/carers will be informed.

### **Procedures for dealing with student malpractice – Externally assessed units**

Where a student is suspected of malpractice in relation to externally assessed units, the **Headteacher** will inform the exam board immediately by completing the appropriate JCQ Form and submitting this and all supporting documentation to JCQ. The student and their parents/carers will be informed.

### **Procedures for dealing with suspected Centre staff malpractice**

Where there is suspicion of staff malpractice the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** will inform the **Headteacher**. Blackfen School's HR process for investigating alleged or suspected malpractice will be instigated. If malpractice is identified, the **Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)** will follow the procedures for contacting the Pearson's Investigations Team by submitting the appropriate JCQ Form. The **Headteacher** will inform the suspected member of staff of their responsibilities and rights. Following the outcome of the Pearson investigation, and if malpractice is confirmed, the **Headteacher** will follow the school's Staff Disciplinary procedures.

### **Communicating malpractice decisions**

Once a decision has been made by the awarding body, it will be communicated in writing to the Headteacher as soon as possible. The Headteacher will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action in cases where this is indicated. The Headteacher will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal.

### **Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice**

Individuals will be directed to further information and the process that will be followed as provided in the JCQ publication *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes*