



THE ECCLESBOURNE SCHOOL

Learning Together for the Future

ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE POLICY

December 2025

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This is a non-statutory policy

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1 Introduction

Malpractice and maladministration' are related concepts, the common theme being that they involve a failure to follow the rules of an examination or assessment. This policy and procedure 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 and/or
- a failure to follow established procedures in relation to a qualification which:
- gives rise to prejudice candidates, and/or
- compromises public confidence in examinations, 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 exams office, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre (SMPP 1)

1.1 Candidate malpractice

'Candidate malpractice' normally means 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 (NEA), the presentation of any practical work, the compilation of portfolios of assessment evidence and the writing of any examination paper (SMPP 2)

1.2 Centre staff malpractice

'Centre staff malpractice' means malpractice committed by:

- a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer at the centre; or
- an individual appointed in another capacity by the centre, such as an invigilator, a Communication Professional, a Language Modifier, a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader or a scribe (SMPP 2)

1.3 Centre malpractice

'Centre malpractice' normally involves malpractice where there is an element of systemic failure, a breach in policies or widespread malpractice such that a centre-level sanction is appropriate (SMPP 2)

1.4 Suspected malpractice

For the purposes of this policy, suspected malpractice means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP, section 19). (SMPP 2)

2 Purpose of the policy

To confirm The Ecclesbourne School 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) (GR 5.3)

3 General principles

In accordance with the regulations, The Ecclesbourne School will:

- Take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after examinations have taken place (GR 5.11)
- Inform the awarding body **immediately** of any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation (GR 5.11)
- As required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with current JCQ document **Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures** and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require (GR 5.11)

4 Preventing malpractice

The Ecclesbourne School has in place:

Robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 3 of JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP 4.3)

This includes ensuring that 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
- Instructing 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
- Post Results Services June 2025 and November 2025
- A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2025-2026
- Guidance for centres on cyber security

Informing and advising candidates how to avoid committing malpractice in examinations/assessments, including the use of AI

All students undertaking non-examined assessments will be informed of plagiarism and the use of AI in relation to malpractice in examinations/assessments.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure:

- All subject teachers are provided with guidance as to their role and responsibility regarding AI misuse in assessments. This should include reference to, and discussion of, the JCQ Document *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*. These discussions should be recorded and that information will be made available to the Ecclesbourne School's Exams Office if required.

- All students who are undertaking an NEA in their subject area are given information about what plagiarism is
- All students who are undertaking an NEA in their subject area are given advice on how AI should not be used
- All students who are undertaking an NEA in their subject area are given information about the risks of AI use and its relation to malpractice
- All students who are undertaking an NEA in their subject area are given an individual copy of the JCQ poster on AI misuse

To guard against plagiarism and AI misuse in examinations/assessment, subject teachers will:

- Ensure all students are given the above advice
- Ensure that all students are issued with a copy of the JCQ Information for candidates – AI (Artificial Intelligence and assessments) or a similar centre document prior to completing their work / prior to signing the declaration of authentication.
- Complete regular checks of student work, as per the JCQ guidance on how to mitigate against AI misuse. These checks will be recorded and that information will be made available to the Ecclesbourne School's Exams Office if required.

5 Identification and reporting of malpractice

Escalating suspected malpractice issues

Once suspected malpractice is identified, any member of staff at the centre can report it using the appropriate channels (SMPP 4.3)

At The Ecclesbourne School this will involve reporting the suspected malpractice to the head of exams who will liaise with the head of centre.

Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding body

- The head of centre 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 document: Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (SMPP 4.1.3)
- The head of centre will ensure that where a candidate who is a child or vulnerable adult is the subject of a malpractice investigation that the candidate's parent/carer/appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation (SMPP 4.1.3)
- The head of centre will use Form JCQ/M1 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 malpractice / maladministration (SMPP 4.4, 4.6)
- Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or NEA component prior to the candidate signing the candidate 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 has potentially been breached. The breach will be reported to the awarding body immediately (SMPP 4.5)

- If, in the view of the investigator, there is sufficient evidence to implicate an individual in malpractice, that individual (candidate or member of staff) will be informed of the rights of accused individuals (SMPP 5.33)
- Once the gathering of information has concluded, the head of centre (or other appointed person) 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 (SMPP 5.35)
- Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases. Form JCQ/M3 will be used for staff (SMPP 5.37)
- 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 head of centre will be informed accordingly (SMPP 5.40)

Communication malpractice decisions

Once the decision has been communicated to the head of centre, the head of centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned and will pass on details of any sanctions and actions in cases where this is indicated. The head of centre will also inform the individuals if they have the right to appeal (SMPP 11.1)

6 Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

The Ecclesbourne School will:

- Provide the individual with information on the process appeal and the timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant;
- Refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ document: A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes.