Examination Procedures - Malpractice

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		Seaton Sluice Middle School
		Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Executive Headteacher	

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1 What is malpractice and maladministration?

1.1 'Malpractice' and 'maladministration' are distinct but 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 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; and/or
- 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 to candidates; and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications compromises; 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 officer, employee or agent of any awarding body or centre. **(SMPP 1)**

1.2 **'Candidate malpractice'** normally involves 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 completion of any examination. **(SMPP 2)**

1.3 **'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. **(SMPP 2)**

1.4 **'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. Examples of malpractice that could result in a finding of centre malpractice are set out in Appendix 2, Part 1 of the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures*. This list is not exhaustive and does not limit the scope of other definitions set out in this document. Other instances of malpractice may be identified and considered by the awarding bodies at their discretion. **(SMPP 2)**

1.5 For the purposes of this document, **'suspected malpractice'** means all alleged or suspected incidents of malpractice (regardless of how the incident might be categorised, as described in SMPP 1.9. **(SMPP 2)**

2 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to confirm Seaton Valley High School has in place a written malpractice policy, which covers all qualifications delivered by the centre and details 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. **(GR 5.3)**

3 General principles

3.1 The Head of Centre is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is always compliant with both the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments. Where an allegation of malpractice is made against a Head of Centre, the responsibilities in this document which apply to the Head of Centre shall be taken on by another person nominated to gather information by the relevant awarding body, such as the Chair of Governors.

3.2 In accordance with the regulations, Seaton Valley High 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 or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, by completing the appropriate documentation **(GR 5.11)**
- as required by an awarding body, ensures 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 information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require **(GR 5.11)**
- ensure any person involved in administering, teaching or completing examinations/assessments is advised that where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved; personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies in accordance with the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures* **(GR 6.2)**

4 Artificial Intelligence (AI) misuse

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

4.2 AI misuse is where a student 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 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

4.3 AI misuse constitutes malpractice as defined in the JCQ publication *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.

4.4 The centre will take guidance from the JCQ documentation on AI Use in Assessment: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications

4.5 Further information can be found in the school's Non-Examination Assessment Policy.

5 Preventing malpractice

5.1 Seaton Valley High School has in place robust processes to prevent and identify malpractice, as outlined in section 4 of the JCQ publication Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures **(SMPP 4.3)**

5.2 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 **(SMPP 3.2)**:

- General Regulations for Approved Centres 2026-
- Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2026-
- Instructions for conducting coursework 2026-
- Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments 2026-
- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2026-
- A guide to the special consideration process 2026-
- Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2026-
- Plagiarism in Assessments (specifically details how work should be referenced to meet JCQ requirements)
- AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications
- Post-Results Services document
- A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes 2026-

6 Identification and reporting of malpractice

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

7 Reporting suspected malpractice to the awarding body

7.1 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 where the offence relates to the content of candidate work (e.g. copying/collusion, plagiarism and/or AI misuse) and the authentication forms have not been signed by the candidate. All other candidate malpractice cases must be reported to the relevant awarding body. **(SMPP 4.5)**

7.2 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).

7.3 The Head of Centre will ensure that where a candidate who is a child/vulnerable

adult is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the candidate's parent/carer/ appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation. **(SMPP 4.1.3)**

7.4 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. **(SMPP 4.4-4.6)**

7.5 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. **(SMPP 4.5)**

7.6 Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment where a candidate **has** signed the declaration of authentication, **must** be reported using a JCQ M1 to the relevant awarding body. If at the time of the malpractice there is no entry for that candidate (who the centre intended to enter), the centre is required to submit an entry by the required entry deadline. 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, this must be reported to the awarding body as per section SMPP 4.1.3 and 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.

7.7 Centres are advised that 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, there should be an internal process in place at the centre so that candidates can request an internal appeal against this decision.

7.8 The awarding body will determine who should gather information for the investigation. The individuals that can be chosen include:

- the Head of Centre
- the Chair of Governors of the centre
- the responsible employer (i.e. Northumberland County Council's Director of Education)
- another suitably qualified individual, such as an Ofsted Inspector
- awarding body staff from the malpractice investigation team

7.9 The person gathering information must have no personal or other conflict of interest in the outcome of the investigation. **SMPP Appendix 3** sets out a guide for gathering information and managing conflicts of interest. **(SMPP 5.8-5.10)**

7.10 Where the Head of Centre wishes to appoint a staff member to gather information, the agreement of the awarding body must be obtained first. The Head of Centre will retain responsibility for ensuring the information has been obtained appropriately. The Head of Centre must ensure the information gathering meets the deadlines and requirements set by the awarding body.

7.11 For candidate malpractice cases, the head of centre may appoint a staff member to gather information for the investigation without needing to consult the awarding

organisation. The Head of Centre must consider potential conflicts of interest when appointing a staff member to gather evidence, in accordance with SMPP 5.8 and 5.10. The Head of Centre will retain responsibility for ensuring the information has been obtained appropriately.

7.12 For all other cases, where the Head of Centre wishes to appoint a senior staff member to gather information, the agreement of the awarding organisation must be obtained first. The awarding organisation will confirm whether or not it agrees to the suggested information gatherer. The Head of Centre will retain responsibility for ensuring the information has been obtained appropriately. The Head of Centre must ensure the information gathering meets the deadlines and requirements set by the awarding organisation.

7.13 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. **(SMPP 5.35)**

7.14 Once the information gathering has concluded, the Head of Centre (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. **(SMPP 5.35)**

7.15 The individual authorised to gather information must report to the awarding body by the time specified, providing all the requested evidence. Failure to do so may itself constitute malpractice. **(SMPP 7-9)**

7.16 Form JCQ/M1 will be used when reporting candidate cases; for centre staff, form JCQ/M3 will be used. **(SMPP 5.37)**

7.17 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)**

7.18 When interviewing members of centre staff or students, centres must conduct those interviews in accordance with their own internal policy for conducting enquiries and with the requirements of this document. This should include reference to their own internal safeguarding policy for interviewing individuals who may be at risk, and, if a centre has any concerns about an individual's wellbeing, they should contact the awarding body before conducting the interview. Further information can be found in Appendix 11 of the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures*.

7.19 Information gatherers must ensure that those implicated in malpractice are given their rights. **(SMPP 5.35)**

7.20 A note or transcript of the interview must be taken and provided to the interviewee to sign and to confirm its accuracy.

7.21 The information gatherer can contact the relevant awarding organisation for guidance or advice at any point.

8 Communicating malpractice decisions

8.1 Once a decision has been made, it will be communicated in writing to the Head of Centre as soon as possible. The Head of Centre will communicate the decision to the

individuals concerned and pass on details of any sanctions and action 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)**

8.2 The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that the accused individual is informed of their rights and responsibilities. Where it is identified that there is a need to exercise discretion in the light of the circumstances of the case in terms of how the evidence is presented to the accused individual (for example, if they have concerns about revealing the identity of a third party mentioned in the documentation), this should be discussed with the awarding organisation.

8.3 If the accused individual is provided with a reduced or redacted set of case documentation by the information gatherer, then the awarding organisation should be provided with the same information as provided to the individual. Where there are multiple individuals involved in the same incident, copies of the redacted documents for each individual should be provided to the awarding organisation.

8.4 In straightforward cases where the evidence appears conclusive as to the nature of the malpractice and who was responsible and the findings are not contested or in doubt, awarding organisations may invoke a summary procedure at any stage of the investigation.

9 Appeals against decisions made in cases of malpractice

9.1 Seaton Valley High School will:

- provide the individual with information on the process and timeframe for submitting an appeal, where relevant
- refer to further information and follow the process provided in the JCQ publication *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes*