SARAH BONNELL
SCHOOL

Malpractice Policy 2026-27

Centre name: Sarah Bonnell School

Centre number: 13232

Coordinator	Rebecca Griffiths, Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Exams)
Review Frequency	Yearly
Created	October 2026
Committee to approve policy	Head of School (Jess Carter, Headteacher) / Executive Head (Andy Hemmings)
The policy is communicated by the following means	
Staff	Policy folder on the staff google drive and staff portal
Parents	October 2026 School Website
Students	Google Classroom, Assemblies, Exams Officer Communication & Form Time

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1. Purpose and scope

Sarah Bonnell School is committed to maintaining the integrity, security and fairness of all examinations and assessments. This policy sets out how the school prevents, identifies, escalates, investigates and reports suspected or actual malpractice and maladministration.

The policy applies to all qualifications and assessments delivered by Sarah Bonnell School, including GCSEs, vocational and technical qualifications, external examinations, non-examination assessments (NEA), coursework, controlled assessments, practical assessments, portfolios and other centre-assessed components. It applies to candidates, teaching and support staff, the Exams Officer, invigilators, contractors, volunteers and any other person acting on behalf of the centre.

This policy is to be read alongside current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations, awarding organisation requirements and the school policies and procedures listed in section 12. Where requirements differ, the current regulations and the relevant awarding organisation's instructions must be followed.

2. Definitions

2.1 Malpractice and maladministration

For the purposes of this policy, the term malpractice is used to cover both malpractice and maladministration. They are distinct but related concepts and may include any act, default or practice which breaches regulations, awarding organisation requirements or established procedures for a qualification.

An incident may constitute malpractice where it gives rise to prejudice to candidates; compromises public confidence in qualifications; compromises, attempts to compromise or may compromise assessment, qualification integrity or the validity of a result or certificate; or damages the authority, reputation or credibility of an awarding organisation or centre.

2.2 Types of malpractice

- Candidate malpractice: malpractice by a candidate in connection with an examination or assessment, including the preparation, authentication or submission of assessed work.
- Centre staff malpractice: malpractice by a member of staff, contractor, volunteer or another person appointed by the centre, including an invigilator, reader, scribe, prompter, practical assistant or other assessment support role.
- Centre malpractice: malpractice involving systemic failure, a breach of centre policies or widespread malpractice where a centre-level response or sanction may be appropriate.
- Maladministration: an act, default or practice arising from the administration of a qualification which fails to follow the required regulations or procedures.

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- Suspected malpractice: any alleged or suspected incident, whether or not it is ultimately substantiated or its category has been determined.

3. Policy principles and responsibilities

Sarah Bonnell School will take all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice before, during and after examinations and assessments. The school will respond promptly, fairly and consistently to concerns, preserve relevant evidence, protect the rights of individuals and cooperate fully with awarding organisations and regulators.

3.1 Head of Centre

- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that suspected or actual malpractice and maladministration are appropriately considered, investigated and reported in accordance with current JCQ and awarding organisation requirements.
- Will notify the relevant awarding organisation of reportable allegations, suspicions or actual incidents within the required timescales, using the current forms and reporting procedures.
- Will decide who is to act as the information gatherer/investigator, ensuring that the person appointed is impartial and has no conflict of interest.
- Will ensure that the individual concerned is informed of the allegation, the process and their rights and responsibilities at the appropriate stage.
- Will ensure that parents/carers or an appropriate adult are kept informed where the candidate is a child or an adult at risk, in accordance with current JCQ requirements.
- Will communicate awarding organisation decisions, sanctions and any right of appeal to the individuals concerned.

3.2 Deputy Headteacher (Examinations)

- Supports the Head of Centre in overseeing examination integrity and the implementation of this policy.
- Works with the Exams Officer to review examination incidents, irregularities and concerns escalated by invigilators or staff.
- Monitors potential malpractice by invigilators and centre staff with the Head of Centre.
- Ensures that relevant staff understand their responsibilities and that appropriate follow-up actions are implemented.
- Supports the management of conflicts of interest in accordance with the school's separate Conflicts of Interest Policy.

3.3 Exams Officer

- Acts as the operational point of contact for suspected examination malpractice and examination irregularities.
- Receives and records reports from invigilators and staff, maintains the Exam Room Incident Log (Appendix Q) and secures relevant evidence.
- Escalates concerns promptly to the Head of Centre and Deputy Headteacher (Examinations).
- Supports the Head of Centre with awarding organisation notifications, current JCQ forms and supporting documentation.
- Ensures that examination scripts and materials are handled, packaged and dispatched in accordance with the normal examination procedures and awarding organisation instructions.
- Maintains secure and confidential records of incidents, evidence, decisions, correspondence and actions.

3.4 Curriculum Leaders and teaching staff

- Must take reasonable steps to prevent malpractice in their subject and assessment areas and ensure that candidates understand the rules applying to their qualification.
- Must report any suspected candidate or staff malpractice immediately to the Exams Officer and Head of Centre. For NEA or centre-assessed work, the relevant Curriculum Leader and SLT link must also be informed.
- Must not investigate, confront individuals about, or attempt to resolve suspected malpractice independently unless directed by the Head of Centre.
- Must ensure that assessment, authentication, marking and moderation procedures follow the relevant specification, JCQ guidance and awarding organisation requirements.
- Inform candidates of their right to appeal against a decision to reject their work on the grounds of suspected malpractice, in accordance with the school's Internal Appeals Procedure and JCQ regulations (e.g. inappropriate/offensive content, copying/collusion, plagiarism, AI misuse)
- Must retain relevant assessment records, drafts and evidence in line with awarding organisation requirements and the school's retention arrangements.

3.5 Invigilators and examination support staff

- Must remain vigilant and follow the current JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and the school's examination procedures.
- Must report any suspected malpractice, breach of examination conditions or irregularity immediately to the Exams Officer.
- Must make a factual, contemporaneous record using the Exam Room Incident Log (Appendix Q), including the time, location, people involved, actions taken and any witnesses.
- Must preserve relevant materials and avoid making assumptions, accusations or promises about the outcome.

3.6 All staff

- Every member of staff has a responsibility to report concerns about possible malpractice or maladministration. Staff must not ignore concerns or attempt to deal with them informally.
- Where a concern involves the Head of Centre, staff should use the school's whistleblowing or Trust escalation arrangements rather than report the matter solely to the person concerned.

4. Preventing malpractice

- The school maintains procedures to prevent and identify malpractice. Staff involved in examinations and assessments must understand the requirements in the current versions of relevant JCQ and awarding organisation documents, including:

General Regulations for Approved Centres;

Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE);

Instructions for conducting coursework and non-examination assessments;

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments;

A guide to the special consideration process;

Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures;

Plagiarism in Assessments;

AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications;

Post-Results Services and guidance on awarding organisations' appeals processes; and

relevant awarding organisation specifications, subject guidance and vocational assessment instructions.

- The Exams Officer and Deputy Headteacher (Examinations) will support staff awareness through appropriate briefings, updates and training. Curriculum Leaders are responsible for ensuring that subject teams understand qualification-specific assessment requirements and changes.

5. Informing and advising candidates

- Candidates are regularly informed about malpractice and how to avoid it through assemblies, written guidance, examination preparation sessions and subject-specific assessment briefings. Assemblies covering JCQ regulations and malpractice, including plagiarism and collusion, are delivered twice each academic year.
- Before candidates begin relevant assessments, the school will provide the applicable JCQ Information for Candidates documents, including information about AI, coursework, NEA and social media where relevant. Subject teachers will explain the rules and expectations for each qualification and assessment.
- Candidates must read the relevant Notice to Candidates and the information within the awarding body's candidate declaration/authentication form before beginning their work. Candidates must not sign a declaration of authentication until they have completed and submitted the work for final assessment, in accordance with the

relevant requirements.

- Candidates are reminded that malpractice can lead to penalties, including loss of marks, disqualification from a component or qualification, or other sanction determined by the awarding organisation.
- All incidents of potential candidate malpractice identified after the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication must be reported to the awarding organisation immediately

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and assessment

Sarah Bonnell School recognises that candidates may encounter and use artificial intelligence tools as part of learning. The rules for assessment are different from the rules for ordinary classroom learning. The assessment conditions for the specific qualification always take precedence.

6.1 Appropriate and permitted use

- Candidates are taught what AI is, when its use may be appropriate outside formal assessment (for example, supporting revision, generating practice questions or checking spelling) and when its use is restricted or prohibited. Candidates must follow the specification, assessment brief, awarding organisation instructions and teacher guidance for each assessment.
- Where AI use is permitted as part of an assessment, candidates must acknowledge and declare its use clearly and accurately in line with current JCQ and awarding organisation guidance. Acknowledgement does not make AI-generated work the candidate's own or guarantee that it can be credited.

6.2 AI misuse

- AI misuse may constitute malpractice where a candidate uses an AI tool in a way that means submitted work is not their own, is not properly acknowledged, or does not meet the assessment conditions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

➔ submitting AI-generated text, images, analysis or other content as the candidate's own work;

➔ copying or paraphrasing AI-generated content without appropriate acknowledgement; using AI when it is prohibited by the assessment conditions;

➔ using AI to produce or substantially develop assessed work in a way that prevents the candidate from demonstrating their own knowledge, skills and understanding; or

➔ using AI in a way that prevents the teacher or assessor from being able to authenticate the work as the candidate's own.

6.3 Risks and staff responsibilities

- Candidates are made aware that AI tools may produce inaccurate or fabricated information, biased or inappropriate content, false references and misleading responses. Over-reliance on AI may also prevent candidates from demonstrating

their own learning and may result in submitted work not being accepted as their own.

- Staff must apply the relevant JCQ and awarding organisation guidance when considering the authenticity of work. Teachers and assessors must only accept work they are satisfied is the candidate's own. AI detection tools must not be treated as conclusive evidence on their own; any concern must be considered fairly alongside the work, the assessment context and other relevant evidence.

- Teachers must review candidate work and determine assessment marks themselves. AI tools must not be used as the sole or primary means of assessing or marking candidates' work. Where relevant to an investigation, evidence such as prompts, AI-generated outputs, drafts and earlier versions of work should be retained where required and where available.

7. Identifying and recording suspected malpractice

- Suspected malpractice may be identified during an examination, during the preparation or marking of internally assessed work, through moderation or verification, or at any other stage of the qualification process.
- Examples may include unauthorised materials or devices in an examination; copying or attempting to copy; collusion; plagiarism; false declarations of authenticity; inappropriate assistance; breaches of assessment conditions; unauthorised disclosure of assessment materials; failure to follow security procedures; or irregularities in the administration, marking or submission of assessment.

7.1 Examination room incidents

- Candidates who are disruptive will be warned by a member of the invigilation team that their behaviour may result in removal from the examination room. They will be informed that the awarding organisation may be notified and that a penalty, which may include disqualification, may be imposed. The Head of Centre has authority to remove a candidate where necessary to protect the conduct of the examination and other candidates.
- Invigilators must record all suspected incidents of malpractice or examination irregularities using the Exam Room Incident Log (Appendix Q). They must retain relevant materials and report the incident immediately to the Exams Officer. If necessary, the invigilator may summon assistance and secure or remove unauthorised materials in accordance with the Exams Officer's instructions and current JCQ procedures.
- The Exams Officer will inform the Deputy Headteacher (Examinations) and Head of Centre, ensure that the incident is recorded and support any required notification to the awarding organisation. Relevant scripts and examination materials must continue to be handled and dispatched in accordance with awarding organisation instructions.

7.2 NEA, coursework and centre-assessed work

- Teachers must ensure that candidates understand the assessment conditions and

complete the required declarations and authentication documentation. Teachers must only authenticate work

where they are satisfied that it is the candidate's own and has been completed under the required conditions. Teachers must review the work in full and determine the assessment mark themselves.

- Where a concern relates to the content of candidate work, including plagiarism, copying, collusion, inappropriate content or AI misuse, the timing of discovery and whether the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication may affect whether the matter must be reported to the awarding organisation. The Head of Centre and Exams Officer must follow the current JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures and the relevant awarding organisation's requirements. Staff must not make this reporting decision independently.
- Where a candidate disputes a centre-assessed mark, the candidate must be given access to the school's Internal Appeals Procedure. A review of marking is distinct from a malpractice investigation.

8. Escalation and reporting

8.1 Internal escalation

- Any member of staff who identifies or suspects malpractice must report the concern immediately to the Exams Officer and Head of Centre.
- Where the concern relates to NEA, coursework or other centre-assessed work, the relevant Curriculum Leader and SLT link must also be informed.
- Where the concern arises during an examination, the invigilator must notify the Exams Officer immediately and complete the Exam Room Incident Log (Appendix Q).
- The Exams Officer will preserve the initial record and any relevant evidence and escalate the matter to the Deputy Headteacher (Examinations) and Head of Centre.
- The Head of Centre will determine the appropriate next steps, including whether the matter must be notified to the awarding organisation and who will gather information.
- Staff must not investigate, interview individuals, make findings or resolve suspected malpractice independently unless specifically directed by the Head of Centre.

8.2 Reporting to awarding organisations

The Head of Centre is responsible for notifying the relevant awarding organisation of reportable alleged, suspected or actual incidents involving candidates, centre staff or the centre. Notifications must be made promptly and within the timescales required by the current JCQ regulations and the awarding organisation.

- The current JCQ forms and procedures must be used. At the time of writing, the relevant forms include:
- JCQ/M1 – notification/reporting of suspected candidate malpractice;
- JCQ/M2 – notification of suspected malpractice or maladministration involving centre staff, before an investigation commences, where required; and
- JCQ/M3 – report into suspected malpractice or maladministration involving centre staff, following information gathering, where required.

The current forms, instructions and reporting routes must always be checked on the JCQ website and with the relevant awarding organisation before submission. The school will not rely on locally saved forms where a newer version is available.

8.3 Exceptions for certain internally assessed work

- Current JCQ procedures provide a limited exception for certain candidate malpractice involving the content of internally assessed work (for example, plagiarism, copying/collusion, inappropriate or offensive content, AI misuse or a false declaration) where the issue is identified before the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication. Such cases may be dealt with through the centre's internal procedures rather than reported to the awarding organisation. This exception does not apply to all forms of malpractice or all assessment circumstances.
- Where the concern involves a breach of assessment conditions that does not relate to the content of the work, or where the declaration has already been signed, reporting may be required. The Head of Centre and Exams Officer must check the current JCQ rules and awarding organisation requirements in every case.

8.4 Candidate safeguarding and support

Where a candidate who is a child or an adult at risk is the subject of a malpractice investigation, the Head of Centre will ensure that the candidate's parent/carer or appropriate adult is kept informed of the progress of the investigation, in accordance with current JCQ requirements. The school will also consider relevant safeguarding and wellbeing needs while maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the process.

9. Information gathering and investigation

- All investigations will be conducted in accordance with the current JCQ Suspected

Malpractice: Policies and Procedures and the relevant awarding organisation's requirements. The Head of Centre will determine whether the school should gather information or whether the awarding organisation will lead the investigation.

- Where the school is required to gather information, the Head of Centre will appoint an appropriate information gatherer. The person appointed must be impartial and must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. Where necessary, an alternative investigator

will be appointed.

The information gatherer will:

- establish the facts objectively and fairly, without assuming that malpractice has occurred; identify the allegation or concern and the relevant regulations or assessment requirements;
- secure and preserve relevant evidence, including examination records, candidate work, drafts, declarations, incident logs, witness accounts, relevant communications and other material;
- maintain a clear record of enquiries, evidence received, dates, decisions and actions;
- ensure that information is handled confidentially and shared only with those who need it for the investigation or as required by the awarding organisation;
- provide the individual concerned with the information required by JCQ, explain their rights and responsibilities and give them an appropriate opportunity to respond before the report is submitted, in line with the current procedure;
- consider whether any information needs to be redacted to protect a third party, discussing this with the awarding organisation where required; and
- prepare a written report summarising the information obtained and actions taken, with supporting documentation, for submission to the awarding organisation where required.
- If an individual is given a reduced or redacted set of case documents, the awarding organisation must receive the same information that was provided to that individual, in accordance with JCQ requirements. Where several individuals are involved, the appropriate redacted documentation must be prepared for each person.

The awarding organisation will determine whether malpractice has occurred, whether further investigation is required and whether a sanction or other action is appropriate. The school will cooperate fully with any awarding organisation investigation and provide information or advice reasonably requested.

10. Conflicts of interest and staff malpractice

- All actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest must be declared, recorded

and managed in accordance with Sarah Bonnell School's separate Conflicts of Interest Policy. Staff must complete the school's Conflict of Interest Form (Appendix T) where required.

- Members of SLT must not start or end examinations for subjects they teach or line manage. Teachers are not permitted to enter examination rooms on the day their subject is examined unless specifically authorised and permitted under current JCQ regulations.
- The Head of Centre and Deputy Headteacher (Examinations) will monitor and report potential malpractice by invigilators and centre staff.
- Any concern involving staff must be escalated to the Head of Centre immediately and handled in accordance with JCQ requirements, the school's relevant employment procedures and safeguarding arrangements where applicable.

Where the allegation concerns the Head of Centre, the matter must be escalated through the appropriate Trust or whistleblowing route so that it can be considered independently.

11. Outcomes, decisions and appeals

- The awarding organisation will communicate its decision in writing to the Head of Centre as soon as possible. The Head of Centre will communicate the decision to the individuals concerned, including any sanction, required action and information about the right to appeal.
- Where an individual has a right to appeal, the school will provide information about the relevant process and timeframe and direct them to the current JCQ guidance, A Guide to the Awarding Organisations' Appeals Processes, and the awarding organisation's own procedures. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with the awarding organisation's published requirements.
- Where a matter is handled internally, the Head of Centre will ensure that the outcome and any action are recorded and communicated appropriately. Any internal action must be consistent with the school's policies, fair process and the relevant awarding organisation requirements.

12. Records, confidentiality and data protection

- The school will maintain a clear, secure and confidential record of each suspected or actual case, including the initial report, incident log, evidence gathered, investigation notes, correspondence with the awarding organisation, decisions, sanctions, appeals and follow-up actions.
- Records will be retained securely for the period required by the relevant JCQ and awarding organisation regulations and the school's records retention arrangements. Access will be restricted to those who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Where malpractice is suspected, personal data relating to candidates or staff may be shared with awarding organisations, regulators or relevant professional bodies where this is necessary and lawful, in accordance with current JCQ requirements and data

protection legislation. The school will communicate relevant information about this processing to candidates and staff at the start of the examination series or assessment process, as appropriate.

13. Monitoring, review and related documents

- The Head of Centre, supported by the Deputy Headteacher (Examinations) and Exams Officer, will monitor the implementation of this policy and ensure that appropriate actions are taken following any incident. Learning from investigations will be used to strengthen procedures, staff training and candidate guidance.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever JCQ regulations, awarding organisation requirements or school procedures change.

Related documents:

Sarah Bonnell School Examinations Policy;

Sarah Bonnell School Conflicts of Interest Policy;

Internal Appeals Procedure;

Exam Room Incident Log (Appendix Q);

Conflict of Interest Form (Appendix T);

Candidate guidance on AI use (Appendix U);

JCQ Information for Candidates documents, as applicable;

JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures;

JCQ AI Use in Assessments: Your role in protecting the integrity of qualifications; and

relevant awarding organisation regulations and qualification-specific guidance.

14. Appendices and operational references

The following school appendices and documents support the operation of this policy. The Exams Officer will ensure that current versions are accessible to relevant staff.

Appendix Q – Exam Room Incident Log.

Appendix S – Current JCQ and awarding organisation malpractice reporting forms and procedures (reference list; always obtain the latest forms from the JCQ website).

Appendix T – Sarah Bonnell School Conflict of Interest Form.

Appendix U – Candidate guidance on appropriate AI use in learning and assessments.

Where a document is maintained separately, the current approved version will be used. References and hyperlinks should be checked before publication.

Publication checks before approval

The following items require completion or confirmation by Sarah Bonnell School before this policy is formally approved and published:

Insert the approving body, approval date and review date on the cover page.

Confirm the precise internal job title used for the Deputy Headteacher responsible for examinations.

Check that Appendix Q, Appendix T and Appendix U are current and use the same titles as the main Examinations Policy.

Insert the school's link to the published policy in the main Examinations Policy (section 15.12).

Confirm the school's records retention period and the wording used in candidate/staff privacy information.

Check all JCQ form references and reporting routes against the latest JCQ and awarding organisation instructions at the point of approval.

Regulatory reference

This policy has been drafted with reference to the JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (2026 edition), the JCQ malpractice guidance and the JCQ guidance on AI use in assessments. It must be read alongside the current versions of all applicable regulations and awarding organisation requirements. The current documents and forms are available from the JCQ website: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/