



Examinations Malpractice and Plagiarism Policy 25/26

Last reviewed: Feb 2026

Next review due: Feb 2027

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Arbour Academy will prevent, identify, report, investigate and manage suspected malpractice and maladministration, in line with JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (Sept 2025) and JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (2025–26).

2. Definitions

2.1 Malpractice

“Malpractice” means any act, default or practice those breaches JCQ/awarding body regulations and/or:

- gives rise to prejudice to candidates; and/or
- compromises public confidence in qualifications; and/or
- compromises (or attempts to compromise) the assessment process, integrity of a qualification, or validity of results/certificates; and/or
- damages the authority, reputation or credibility of an awarding body or centre.

Malpractice includes **maladministration** (failures in administration) and **non-compliance** with regulations.

2.2 Suspected malpractice

All alleged, suspected or actual incidents are treated as “suspected malpractice” for the purposes of reporting and investigation.

2.3 Centre staff malpractice

Malpractice committed by a member of staff, contractor, volunteer, or any individual appointed by the centre (e.g., invigilator, reader, scribe, prompter, communication professional, oral language modifier, practical assistant).

2.4 Candidate malpractice

Malpractice by a candidate connected with any examination or assessment, including **NEA/coursework**, practical work, portfolios, and written exams.

Note on terminology: Where “controlled assessment” appears in legacy specifications, this policy treats it as included within **NEA/coursework** for current practice.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Holds overall accountability for compliance with JCQ and awarding body requirements, including malpractice reporting and cooperation.

Malpractice Coordinator (Deputy Headteacher)

- Coordinates investigations, evidence collection, interviews, reporting, and communications.

Exams Officer

- Ensures exam-day processes prevent malpractice and supports reporting/record keeping.

Staff

- Must report concerns immediately and cooperate with investigations.

4. Prevention (centre controls)

Arbour Academy will take reasonable steps to prevent malpractice, including:

- secure storage and controlled access to confidential materials;
- robust invigilation arrangements and candidate briefings;
- NEA authentication and internal standardisation processes;
- staff training (including invigilators and access arrangement facilitators);
- clear candidate information about prohibited items and exam rules.

5. Identification and immediate actions

5.1 If malpractice is suspected during an exam

- The candidate will be informed that an incident has been noted (where appropriate without causing disruption).
- Any unauthorised material may be removed, labelled, and retained as evidence.
- The exam may continue where possible (unless awarding body rules require otherwise).
- The incident will be logged (time, invigilator account, seating plan, witnesses).
- The Exams Officer will alert the Malpractice Coordinator and Head of Centre as soon as practicable.

5.2 If malpractice is suspected in NEA/coursework/portfolio

- Evidence will be secured (versions, drafts, plagiarism reports, authentication forms).
- The work may be withheld from submission pending investigation where permitted by awarding body guidance.

6. Reporting to awarding bodies (JCQ forms)

Arbour Academy will follow JCQ/awarding body instructions on reporting, including use of:

- **JCQ/M1** Suspected candidate malpractice
- **JCQ/M2** Notification of suspected malpractice/maladministration involving centre staff
- **JCQ/M3** Report into suspected malpractice/maladministration involving centre staff

Where JCQ/awarding body guidance requires **immediate reporting**, the centre will not delay reporting while internal fact-finding continues.

7. Investigations: principles and process

7.1 Principles

- Investigations will be fair, proportionate, evidence-based and timely.
- An allegation is not proof; no assumptions will be made.
- Conflicts of interest will be managed (investigator must be independent of the allegation).

7.2 Staff malpractice investigation procedure

The Malpractice Coordinator will ensure the initial fact-finding begins promptly and will aim to complete centre information gathering **within 10 working days where feasible**, subject to awarding body timescales and instructions.

The staff member will be:

- informed in writing of the allegation;
- informed of the evidence supporting the allegation (as appropriate);
- informed of possible outcomes/sanctions;
- given the opportunity to respond and submit a written statement;
- advised they may seek representation/advice in line with HR procedures;
- informed of the relevant appeals route;
- informed that serious cases may be shared with awarding bodies and may be referred to regulators, the police and/or professional bodies (e.g., **TRA/EWC**, as applicable).

7.3 Candidate malpractice investigation procedure

- The candidate will be given an opportunity to explain and provide a statement.
- The centre will gather evidence: invigilator statements, seating plans, confiscated materials, CCTV where appropriate and lawful, IT logs where relevant, witness accounts.
- The centre will submit required documentation to the awarding body in line with JCQ/awarding body instructions.

7.4 Confidentiality, anonymity, and wellbeing

- Information will be shared only with those who need it for the investigation.
- The centre will consider requests for confidentiality/anonymity and follow JCQ guidance.
- The centre will take reasonable steps to support the wellbeing and safeguarding of staff and candidates involved during a suspected malpractice case.

8. Sanctions and outcomes

8.1 Centre staff sanctions (awarding body)

Awarding bodies may apply a range of sanctions (indicative), including:

- written warning;
- required training/mentoring;
- special conditions on involvement in assessments/exams;
- suspension/bar from involvement for a period.

The centre will also consider internal HR/disciplinary processes where appropriate (separately from awarding body sanctions).

8.2 Candidate sanctions (awarding body)

Awarding bodies may apply sanctions up to and including:

- warning;
- loss of marks for a section/component;
- disqualification from a component/unit/qualification;
- disqualification from all qualifications in the series;
- debarment for a period.

Note: references in older documents to “units” apply mainly to unitised qualifications/VTQs; linear GCSE/A levels are typically sanctioned at component/qualification level.

9. Communication

- The **Head of Centre** is responsible for communicating decisions/outcomes to the individuals concerned, and for ensuring required notifications are made.
- The centre will not speculate on outcomes while an awarding body investigation is ongoing.
- Candidate/parent communications will be factual and compliant with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

10. Appeals

- Staff and candidates may appeal decisions **in line with the centre’s Appeals Policy** and awarding body processes where applicable.
- The centre will provide clear information on how to submit an appeal and relevant deadlines.

11. Record keeping and retention

All malpractice records (reports, evidence logs, statements, communications, outcomes) will be retained securely in line with JCQ retention expectations (typically until after post-results deadlines and any subsequent enquiries/appeals are concluded).

12. Data protection and lawful sharing

All personal data processed under this policy will be handled in accordance with:

- **UK GDPR**
- **Data Protection Act 2018**

Information may be shared with awarding bodies and, where necessary, regulators or law enforcement, where there is a lawful basis and it is necessary and proportionate. JCQ General Regulations explicitly cover centres’ obligations regarding personal data.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect:

- updated JCQ regulations and malpractice guidance;
- awarding body updates;
- relevant legislative changes.