

# St Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy



## Plagiarism and Malpractice Policy

“We commit ourselves to love,  
respect and serve one another  
as disciples of Jesus Christ”

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## **Learner Malpractice**

### **1. – Definition of learner malpractice**

Any action instigated by a learner, which undermines the integrity and validity of assessment or certification of qualifications.

### **2 – Examples of learner malpractice**

Misconduct covers a range of offences, which can be collectively described as cheating. The following is not an exhaustive list and the Academy reserves the right to include any other type of cheating under the terms of this policy.

- a) Plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the learners own, the whole or part(s) of another person's work, including artwork, images, words, computer generated work, thoughts, inventions and/or discoveries whether published or not, with or without the originators permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source.
- b) Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work. Learners should not be discouraged from teamwork however.
- c) Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.
- d) Fabrication of results and/or evidence.
- e) The deliberate destruction of another's work.
- f) Falsely claiming extenuating circumstances to gain an unfair advantage in assessment outcomes

### **3. – Procedure**

#### **3.1 – Investigating Learner Misconduct**

There will be an investigation if learner misconduct is suspected which may lead to disciplinary action.

- a) Learners who attempt to gain an award by deceitful means will automatically have their result(s) suspended (held) pending a thorough investigation instigated by the Quality Nominee who will have been informed by the course leader. The learner will be informed at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences.
- b) The outcome of the investigation will determine the appropriate course of action to be taken by the Academy. Any case where learner malpractice is found to be substantiated will be reported to the awarding body.
- c) If no evidence is found that the learner cheated, then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the learner and the grade achieved should be awarded.

#### **3.2 – Where a Learner is accused of malpractice**

- a) Should a learner be accused of malpractice they will be informed of the allegation made against him or her; know what evidence there is to support the allegation; know the possible consequences should malpractice be proven; be informed of the appeals procedure.

- b) The learner's parents/guardian will be contacted and informed of the allegation.
- c) The course leader will interview the learner affected by the alleged malpractice or other responsible member of staff appointed by the Headteacher.
- d) The learner has 48 hours in which to prepare a response to the allegations.
- e) A decision is made from:
  - The learner has no case to answer and the allegations are unfounded.
  - Warning. The learner is issued with a warning that if the offence is repeated within a set period of time, further specified sanctions will be applied. If applicable the discrete section of work subject to malpractice will be discounted.
  - Disqualification from certification for the specific unit subject to malpractice.
- f) Disqualification from the course.
- g) The learner may appeal against the decision. This must be done in writing within 7 working days of the decision.

### **3.3 – Preventing Learner Misconduct**

The Academy will take positive steps to prevent and reduce the occurrence of malpractice by learners. These will include:

- a) Using the induction period to inform learners of the Academy's policy on malpractice and consequent penalties.
- b) Showing learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Learners should not be discouraged from conducting research; indeed evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of higher grades. However, the submitted work must show evidence that the learner has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and has acknowledged any sources used.
- c) Introducing procedures for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice, e.g. plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc. These procedures may include:
  - The requirement for interim work to be handed in before final deadlines to give a picture of the learner's progress.
  - Periods of supervised sessions during which evidence for assignments/tasks/coursework is produced by the learner.
  - Altering assessment assignments/tasks/tools on a regular basis.
  - the assessor assessing work for a single assignment/task in a single session for the complete cohort of learners.
  - Using oral questions with learners to ascertain their understanding of the concepts, application, etc. within their work.
  - Assessors getting to know their learners' styles and abilities.
- d) Ensuring access controls are installed to prevent learners from accessing and using other people's work when using networked computers.



## **Staff Malpractice**

### **4.1 - Examples of malpractice by Academy staff**

The list below is not an exhaustive or definitive list.

- Assisting learners in the production of work for assessment where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves Academy staff producing work for the learner.
- Producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated.
- Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's work, to be included in a learner's portfolio/assignment.
- Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support such as a scribe. Support is only permissible up to the point where such support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment.
- Fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.
- Failure to keep any awarding body mark schemes secure.
- Alteration of awarding body assessment and grading criteria.
- Failure to assess learner work within an appropriate timescale.
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation.
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration or substitution; or by fraud.

### **4.2 - Investigating alleged staff malpractice**

- The investigation will be conducted by the Head or his/her nominated representative.
- The Academy will make the accused fully aware of the alleged malpractice and of possible consequences should the malpractice be proven.
- The Academy will give the accused the opportunity to respond and the right of appeal should a judgment be made against them.

### **4.3 - Penalties and Sanctions**

- Sanctions will follow the code laid down in the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- Where malpractice against the Academy member of staff is proven, Edexcel will be informed.

## **Appendix 1: BTEC Appeals & Complaints Procedure**

### **Grounds for Appeal**

A learner/candidate would have grounds for appeal / complaint against an assessment decision in the following situations.

- a) The work is not assessed according to the set criteria or the criteria given to the learners is unclear.
- b) The final grade of the work does not match the criteria set for grade boundaries or the grade boundaries are not explained appropriately.
- c) The internal verification procedure goes against the assessment grades awarded.
- d) There is evidence of preferential treatment (favouritism) towards other learners/candidates.
- e) The conduct of the assessment did not conform to the published requirements of the Awarding Body
- f) Valid, agreed, extenuating circumstances (things that are beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your coursework or examinations than you might have expected) were not taken into account at the time of assessment, which the school was aware of prior to the submission deadline.
- g) Agreed deadlines were not observed by staff.
- h) The current Assessment Plan was not adhered to.
- i) The decision to reject coursework on the grounds of malpractice and the learner believes this to be unfair.

### **Formal Appeal Procedures**

- a) If, after informal discussion with the Internal Verifier, the candidate wishes to make a formal appeal, the candidate must ask the Internal Verifier, in writing, for their work to be re-assessed. This must be done within 10 working days of receiving the original assessment result.
- b) The Quality Nominee with the Internal Verifier/Lead IV, on receipt of the formal appeal from the candidate, will try to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation between the relevant assessor and the candidate. If it is not possible to reach an agreement, the Quality Nominee and the Internal Verifier/Lead IV will set a date for the Internal Verification Appeals Panel to meet.
- c) The Internal Verification Appeals Panel will be convened and will meet within 2 weeks of the receipt of the appeal by the Internal Verifier/Lead IV, with re-assessment, if deemed necessary by the panel, taking place within 15 working days of the appeals panel meeting.
- d) The outcome of the appeal may be:
  - Confirmation of original decision;
  - A re-assessment by an independent assessor;
  - An opportunity to resubmit for assessment within a revised agreed timescale.