



**ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE
EXAMS POLICY INC EXAM CONTINGENCY
PLAN & ADDENDUM 2024-2025 Incl. EXAMS WHISTLE BLOWING
POLICY 2024-25 Exams Whistle Blowing Policy**

The policy purpose

The purpose of this exam policy is:

- To ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of the candidates
- To ensure the operation of an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exam policy will be reviewed annually.

Please see JCQ "AI Policy".

Exam responsibilities

The head of centre:

- Has overall responsibility of the College as an exam centre advises on appeals and re-marks
- Is responsible for reporting all suspicious or actual incidents of malpractice – refer to the JCQ document *Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments*
- *Is responsible for ensuring the College adheres to JCQ regulations and exam procedures*

The exams office manager / exams officer:

- Manages the administration of public and internal exams
- Advises the Senior Leadership Team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various awarding bodies
- Oversees the production and distribution to staff and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- Ensure candidates are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect them
- Receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts

- Marks applications for special consideration
- Identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- Checks invoices related to exam costs/charges
- Advises SLT regarding the number of invigilators required for exams
- Trains all existing and new invigilators in their role
- Arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- Maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams

The Vice Principal

- Manages external validation of courses followed at Key stage 4/post-16

Heads of department (including subject co-ordinators)/school/curriculum are responsible for:

- Guidance and Pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries
- Involvement in post-results procedures
- Accurate completion of internal mark sheets and declaration sheets
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exam officer, including resit entries, following checks by HD/Subject leader of fee payments by candidates

Teachers are responsible for:

- Submission of candidates' names to heads of department/school/curriculum

The special education needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCO) is responsible for:

- Identification and testing of candidates, requirements for access arrangements
- The provision of additional support – with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, IT equipment – to help candidates achieve their course aims.

Lead invigilator/invigilators are responsible for:

- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exam's office before the start of the exam
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams officer.

Candidates are responsible for:

- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- Understand controlled assessment regulations and signing an authentication statement confirming that they have read and followed these instructions.

Qualifications

Qualifications offered

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Head of Centre, Vice Principal, Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team.

The qualifications offered are GCE, OCR Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, university entrance examinations, LIBF and Cambridge Technicals.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the centre's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of specification from the previous year, the exams office must be informed prior to the start of the course.

Informing the exams office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the heads of department.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, SENDCO, SLT, subject teachers and head of subject.

Exam series and timetables

Exam series

External exams and assessments are scheduled throughout the academic year.

The Head of Centre and Head of Department decides which exam series are used in the centre.

On-demand assessments can be scheduled only in windows agreed between the exams officer and the senior leadership team.

Timetable

Once confirmed, the exams officer will circulate the exam timetable for internal exams and external exams.

Entries, entry details and late entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by subject teachers.

The centre does not accept entries from external/private candidates.

Entry deadlines are circulated to Heads of Department via email and meetings.

Late entries are authorised by head of centre and heads of subject.

Re-sits will meet the terminal rules and re-sit requirements.

Re-sit decisions will be made in consultation with candidates, subject teachers, and Heads of Department.

Exam fees

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

Entry exam fees are paid by the centre.

Exam fees are paid by the centre.

Late entry or amendment fees are paid by the departments.

Fee reimbursements are not sought from candidates who fail without good reason to complete the requirements of a public exam where the governing body or local authority originally paid/agreed to pay the fee.

Re-sit fees are paid by the candidates, and HODs/Subject leaders must ensure payments are made before entry.

Disability Discrimination Act

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the disability provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and the Disability Equality Duty (DED), introduced in 2006.

The DDA introduced measures aimed at eliminating the discrimination often faced by disabled people. The main provisions of the Act give protection to disabled people in the areas of employment and education.

A person has a disability for the purposes of the DDA if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre, Vice Principal, Heads of Department, exams officer and SENDCO.

Access arrangements

Access Arrangements for Public Examinations.

As specified in the Joint Council for qualifications regulations: 'The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.'

Students have to be assessed to qualify for the following Access Arrangements and depending on their needs the most appropriate arrangement will be awarded.

Access Arrangements can include:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a prompter

NB: A candidate with English as an Additional Language is not automatically entitled to Access Arrangements. JCQ clearly stipulates that: ‘the candidate must have an impairment in their first language which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect. A candidate does not have a learning difficulty simply because their first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.’

The deadlines for the Application for Access Arrangements are as follows:

The SENDCO will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENDCO can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

A candidate’s access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENDCO, doctor, pastoral teacher and/or educational psychologist/specialist teacher.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take exams/assessments is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENDCO.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENDCO and Assistant Principal for College Operations.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SENDCO with the exams officer.

Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for exams administration is the responsibility of the Vice Principal.

Estimated grades

Heads of Department and subject teachers are responsible for submitting estimated grades to the exams office when requested by the exams officer.

Managing invigilators

Support staff, and external staff are used to invigilate examinations.

These invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams.

Recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

Invigilators are trained in JCQ standards set out in the ICE booklet (instructions for conducting examinations)

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the School Business Manager.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the agency.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the centre administration.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the centre administration.

Malpractice

The head of centre is responsible for investigating suspected malpractice.

Exam Days

The exams officer will make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

Site management is responsible for setting up the allocated rooms.

The lead invigilator/exams officer will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Any teachers who teach the subject being examined, or a senior member of teaching staff who has had overall responsibility for the candidate's preparation for the examination CANNOT act as an invigilator during the examinations.

All and any staff (barring those nominated by the Principal) must not be present in any examination room during an exam.

In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Exam papers must not be read by teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to heads of department at the end of the exam session.

Candidates

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and other electronic devices apply at all times.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Candidates may only leave the exam room for a genuine purpose and are required to return immediately to the exam room. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

The exams officer is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on exam day.

For clash candidates, the supervision of escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision is the responsibility of the exam officer.

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre, the exams officer, or the exam invigilator, to that effect.

The exams officer must support any special consideration claim with the appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example, by providing a letter from the candidate's doctor.

The exams officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

Internal assessments

Internal assessment replaces the largely discontinued term coursework.

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The heads of department should ensure a C.O.P is completed as a Record of Dispatch.

Results

Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

Candidates will receive individual result slips on results days in person at the centre.

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the exams officer.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the senior leadership team.

EARs

EARs may be requested by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. Please note that this could result in the mark being downgraded, in which case the original higher grade **will not** be reinstated. The candidate's consent is required before any EAR is requested.

A candidate or parent's request for an EAR will be required to pay up front on parent pay. If the grade does change, a refund can be requested by the candidate.

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

Re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

Certificates

Certificates are presented in person and collected and signed for.

Certificates cannot be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, unless they have been authorised to do so.

July 2024

Signed: **Date:**

Chair of the Curriculum Committee

Review Date: 2025

Addendum:

Purpose of the Plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at St Michael's Catholic College. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on the exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by scenarios contained in the *joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examination policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place minimizing risk to examination administration, should the examination officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- Sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained

Entries

- Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- Candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- Awarding body entry deadlines missed or late, or other penalty fees being incurred

Pre-exams

- Exam timetabling, rooming allocation, and invigilation schedules not prepared
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- Exam/assessment not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies/external moderators

Exam time

- Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- Candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

Results and post results

- Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- The facilitation of the post-results services

Centre Actions

- Mr Odoi (Exams) to take control and assist with above planning under the supervision of TRU (SLT)

2. SENCO extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- Candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangements requirements
- Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-exams

- Approval for access arrangements not applied to the awarding body
- Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline

Exam time

- Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre Actions

- Ms Nottage to take control and assist with above planning, communicating with Exams Department

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer, resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time, resulting in:
 - Candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
 - Late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies

- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

Centre actions

- HOD to take control and assist with above planning and communicating with Exams Department

4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of the exam

Centre actions

- Mrs Keane to seek invigilators from agency
- Mr Hurley (Exams Officer) to have trained invigilators on stand-by

5. Exam Rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or unavailable at short notice

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Exams Officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exam timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions

- GSM (SLT) to have rooms prepared and free for exams

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- MIS system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS system failure during exams preparation
- MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions

- NHA (IT Department) to be on stand-by and have a back-up system put in place to rectify

7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions

- The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this i.e. other accommodation may be used

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Candidates unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions

- The centre to communicate with relevant awarding bodies at the outset to make the aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers, candidates regarding solutions to the issue. Special consideration where appropriate.

9. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for schedules examinations

Centre actions

- Centre will inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as possible. Other accommodation to be at Millwall Football Club. Contact as follows:

Ms Veronica Quinn
 Head of Hospitality & Events
 Millwall Football Club
 The Den
 Zampa Road
 London
 SE16 3LN

Tel: 0207 740 0504 / 0207 232 2122

Email: events@millwallplc.com

10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions

- Centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. Special consideration where appropriate

11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions

- Centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. An alternative transportation is sought.

12. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

Centre actions

- Head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisations and subsequently to students and their parents/carers. Communication to Exam Boards.

13. Centre unable to distribute results

Criteria for the implementation of the plan

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions

- Centre to contact awarding organisations about alternative options

Malicious Software, Malware and Cyber Attacks

All files downloaded from the Internet, received via e-mail or on removable media (e.g. flash or external hard drive) must be checked for any malicious software using College provided anti-virus or anti-malware software before using them. Users should

allow regular updates to occur and contact IT support immediately if any matters arise with college-owned devices. Any individual using lease-to-buy devices should contact the relevant companies for direct support. Home computers must have regular system and updates to protect both users at home and the College from malicious software. Software and security updates must be run frequently on home devices. These checks are the responsibility of individuals using devices at home. – see also page 6 of the

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY 2024-25

If St Michael's suffers from a cyber-attack it will undertake the following procedures:

- 1) Enact incident management plan
- 2) Contact the [NCSC](#)
- 3) Contact local law enforcement and [Action Fraud](#)
- 4) Inform the Department for Education by emailing: sector.securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

In addition St Michael's will ensure that the following is undertaken:

- backing up the right data (including evidence to support this year's teacher assessed grades)
- the backups are held offline
- they have tested that they can restore services and recover data from the backups

Ofqual

What schools and college and other centre should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

JCQ

General regulations

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents> (joint contingency plan)

Instructions for conducting examinations

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice...instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

GOV.UK

Dispatch of exam scripts guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam0scripts-yellow-label-service>

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

Risk	Early Warning	Control to prevent	Control to resolve
Invigilator does not turn up	Phone call or scripts not collected	Invigilator timetables – emailed	On busy days other staff or Exams Officer to cover
Fire alarm goes off			Ensure invigilators are aware of policy. SLT to assist in maintaining security of exam
Student taken ill during exam			Invigilator aware of policy, first aider on call. Special consideration for all students
Bad weather/transport problems	Weather report	Possible delay to start of exam	Delay start, contact awarding body, isolation of candidates if necessary if late and hold staggered sessions if necessary. Special consideration.
Students do not turn up for their exam		Student timetables and information from subject teachers	Exams Officer to ring students. Invigilator to stay later if necessary
Students turn up who are not entered		Subject teachers/department heads ensure entry checklists are correct	Find a paper, seal them, amend attendance list and make entry. Charge late fee to department
Cheating in the room	Invigilators reports problem	Warning to candidate and information from tutor	Invigilator aware of policy, SLT on-call to deal with malpractice issues
Disruption in the room	Invigilators reports problem	Warn candidates and information from tutors. Information from tutors to Exams Officer re. problem students to isolate	Invigilator aware of policy, SLT on-call to deal with malpractice issues
Late arrivals	Phone call or just turns up late	Candidate timetables and information from tutors	Invigilator aware of policy
Exams Officer does not turn up	Phone call		SLT to have a back-up policy
Exam room flooded	Check room or invigilator reports problem	Regular premises checks	Find alternative accommodation. Special consideration



ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

EXAMS WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY 2024-25

Whistleblowing at St Michael's Catholic College is encouraged, not penalised, and staff are made aware that they have a duty to report any concerns they have about the conduct of examinations.

The head of centre and governing board at St Michael's aim to create and maintain an approach to examinations that reflects an ethical culture and encourages staff and students to be aware of and report practices that could compromise the integrity and security of examinations.

In compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**¹, St Michael's Catholic College will:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice (which includes maladministration) before, during and after assessments have taken place
- 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
- as required by an awarding body, gather evidence of any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) in accordance with the JCQ publication **Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**² and provide such information and advice as the awarding body may reasonably require

This policy requirement has been added within **General Regulations for Approved Centres** in response to the recommendations within the report of the *Independent Commission on Examination Malpractice*³.

This policy sets out the whistleblowing procedures at St Michael's Catholic College. It has been produced by Ms Tania Rughooputh, who is a member of the senior leadership team and responsible for handling any cases of Exams whistleblowing. She is fully aware of the contents of this policy and will escalate any instances of malpractice to the relevant awarding body/bodies.

This policy also sets out the principles which allow members of centre staff and students to feel confident in reporting instances of actual, alleged or suspected malpractice to relevant members of senior leadership.

Purpose of the policy

This policy:

- encourages individuals to raise concerns, which will be fully investigated by appropriately trained and experienced individuals
- identifies how to report concerns

- explains how such concerns will be investigated and sets expectations regarding the reporting of outcomes
- provides details of relevant bodies to whom concerns about wrong doing can be reported, including awarding organisations and regulators
- includes a commitment to reasonably do everything to protect the reporter's identity, if requested
sets out how those raising concerns will be supported.

This policy also details the steps that could be taken by an individual involved in the management, administration and/or conducting of examinations if St Michael's Catholic College fails to comply with its obligation to report any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration.

The Whistleblower

A whistleblower is defined as a person who reports an actual or potential wrongdoing and is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, providing they are acting in the public interest.

If the person raising the issue is a worker, this will be considered as whistleblowing. This includes agency staff and contractors.

Reporting

If a member of centre staff involved in the management, administration and/or conducting of examinations (such as exams officer, exams assistant or invigilator), a student or a member of the public (such as a parent/carer) has a concern or reason to believe that malpractice has or will occur in an examination or assessment, concerns should normally be raised initially with Ms Tania Rughooputh who is the member of the senior leadership team with oversight of exam administration, or in her absence, Ms Tania Rughooputh, who will be covering these duties. Ms Felicity Corcoran as Principal will make any final decision concerning appropriate action.

However, there may be times when it may be more appropriate to refer the issue direct to the governing board, most often when the allegation is against the head of centre.

Examples of malpractice

In addition to the centre wide Whistleblowing Policy, this exams-specific policy, includes reference to exams-related breaches including, but not limited to, the following:

- Failure to comply with exam regulations as set out by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and its awarding bodies
- A security breach of the examination paper
- Conduct of centre staff which undermines the integrity of the examination
- Unfair treatment of candidates by either giving an advantage to a candidate/group of candidates (e.g. by permitting a candidate an access arrangement which is not supported by appropriate evidence), or disadvantaging candidates by not providing access to the appropriate conditions (providing a 'level playing field')
- Possible fraud and corruption (e.g. accessing the exam paper prior to the exam to aid teaching and learning)
- Abuse of authority (e.g. the head of centre/members of the senior leadership team overriding JCQ and awarding body regulations)
- Other conduct which may be interpreted as malpractice/maladministration

Whistleblowing procedure

If the individual does not feel safe raising the issue/reporting malpractice within the centre, or they have done so and are concerned that no action has been taken, that individual could consider making their disclosure⁴ to a malpractice expert at the awarding body for the qualification where malpractice is suspected.

For members of centre staff, it is likely that the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA)⁵ offers you legal protection from being dismissed or penalised for raising certain serious concerns ('blowing the whistle'). Whistleblowing rights under PIDA are day one rights⁶. This means that the worker does not need the same two years' service that is needed for other employment rights.

In order to investigate concerns effectively, the awarding body should be provided with as much information as possible/is relevant, which may include:

- The qualifications and subjects involved
- The centre involved
- The names of staff/candidates involved
- The regulations breached/specific nature of suspected malpractice
- When and where the suspected malpractice occurred
- Whether multiple examination series are affected
- If the issue has been reported to the centre and what the outcome was
- How the issue became apparent

Members of the public are not protected by PIDA, but the awarding body will make every effort to protect their identity if that is what they wish, unless the awarding body is legally obliged to release it⁷.

Alternatively, a worker could consider making a disclosure to Ofqual⁸ as a prescribed body for whistleblowing to raise a concern about wrongdoing, risk or malpractice.

Anonymity

In some circumstances, the whistleblower might find it difficult to raise concerns with the nominated member of the senior leadership team. If a concern is raised anonymously, the issue may not be able to be taken further if insufficient information has been provided. In such instances, and if appropriate, the allegation may be disclosed to a union representative, who could then be required to report the concern without disclosing its source. Alternatively, whistleblowers or others with concerns about potential malpractice can report the matter direct to Ofqual, who is identified as a 'prescribed body'⁹. Awarding organisations are not prescribed bodies under whistleblowing legislation; however, awarding organisation investigation teams do give those reporting concerns the opportunity for anonymity.

A whistleblower can give his/her name, but may also request confidentiality; the person receiving the information should make every effort to protect the identity of the whistleblower.

Students

⁴ Reference www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/public-interest-disclosure-act/

⁵ Reference **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/23/contents

⁶ Reference <https://protect-advice.org.uk/pida/>

⁷ Reference www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment/malpractice/whistleblowing/

⁸ Reference www.gov.uk/guidance/ofquals-whistleblowing-policy

⁹ Reference www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies

Students at St Michael's Catholic College are made to feel comfortable discussing/reporting malpractice issues of which they are aware. The regulations surrounding their assessments, and wider academic integrity, will be reiterated to students who are undertaking, or who are about to undertake, their courses of study.

SEN/EXAMS

Senior Leadership Team

July 2024

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair of the Curriculum Committee

Review Date: 2025