Bowbrook School

BOWBROOK HOUSE SCHOOL

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (EXAMS)

2026/27

THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE JCQ REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR AND UPDATED IMMEDIATELY IF REGULATORY CHANGES REQUIRE AMENDMENT.

The centre encourages all staff, invigilators, governors, volunteers and candidates to report concerns relating to examination integrity at the earliest opportunity. Prompt reporting assists the centre in meeting its obligations under JCQ General Regulations and helps ensure the integrity, security and fairness of examinations and assessments. This includes concerns relating to malpractice, maladministration, conflicts of interest, access arrangements, confidential materials and examination conduct.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the procedures for reporting concerns about the integrity and security of examinations and assessments. It ensures compliance with JCQ regulations and promotes an ethical culture where staff and students can raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all centre staff, invigilators, students, governors and volunteers involved in exams administration.

WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting suspected malpractice or wrongdoing in the public interest. Examples include:

- Exam fraud or cheating
- Breaches of JCQ regulations
- Tampering with assessment materials
- Unethical behaviour by staff or students

JCQ COMPLIANCE

In accordance with the current edition of the **JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres** and **JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures**, the Head of Centre will:

- Ensure suspected malpractice or maladministration is reported immediately to the relevant awarding organisation.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent malpractice before, during and after examinations and assessments.
- Ensure all staff involved in the administration, invigilation and assessment of qualifications understand their responsibilities under JCQ regulations.
- Cooperate fully with awarding organisation and JCQ investigations.
- Maintain records and evidence relating to reported concerns and investigations.

The centre recognises that concerns regarding exam security, confidential materials, candidate malpractice, staff malpractice, access arrangements, invigilation practice or assessment procedures must be reported without delay.

PRINCIPLES

Whistleblowing is encouraged, not penalised. Reports will be treated seriously, investigated promptly, and handled confidentially. No individual will suffer detriment for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

EXAMPLES OF CONCERNS

- Failure to follow the current JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- Unauthorised access to exam papers
- Improper assistance to candidates
- Failure to follow JCQ regulations during exams
- Falsification of assessment records.
- Breach of exam room conditions.
- Unauthorised communication devices in examination rooms.
- Failure to secure confidential examination materials.
- Improper supervision of candidates.
- Inappropriate access arrangement provision.
- Failure to report malpractice or maladministration.
- Disclosure of confidential examination content.
- Breaches of overnight supervision, timetabled supervision or emergency arrangements.
- Failure to maintain examination records required by JCQ.

REPORTING CONCERNS

Concerns can be reported through the following channels:

- **Internal Reporting:**
  Contact the Exams Officer in person or via email at julie.ironside@bowbrookhouseschool.co.uk
- **External Reporting:**
  Concerns may be reported directly to the relevant awarding body (e.g., AQA, OCR, Pearson) or to JCQ.

Concerns should normally be reported to the Exams Officer or Head of Centre.

Where the allegation involves the Exams Officer, it should be reported directly to the Head of Centre.

Where the allegation involves the Head of Centre, the concern should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors and/or the relevant awarding organisation.

Anonymous disclosures will be considered where sufficient evidence is available.

Concerns involving examination malpractice may also be reported directly to the relevant awarding organisation or Ofqual where appropriate.

PROCEDURE

1. Identify the Concern: Gather relevant facts and evidence.
2. Report the Concern: raise the concern with the Exams Officer or a designated Senior Leader. If the concern involves these individuals or you feel unsafe, report directly to the Head of Centre
3. Investigation: The Exams Officer will initiate a confidential investigation in line with JCQ's
4. If unresolved or you fear retaliation, contact the awarding body or a prescribed regulator (e.g., Ofqual). Reports can be made in writing, verbally, or anonymously.
5. Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures.
6. Outcome: Findings will be shared with relevant parties, and appropriate action will be taken.

INVESTIGATION

The Head of Centre will appoint a Senior Leader to investigate. Findings will be documented and shared with the awarding body if required.

STAFF AWARENESS

All staff involved in examinations, assessments and invigilation will be made aware of:

- The Whistleblowing Policy.
- Internal Appeals Procedure.
- Suspected Malpractice Policy.
- Current JCQ Instructions for Conduction Exams
- General Regulations.
- Centre Examination Contingency Plan,
- Access Arrangements Policy (where applicable)

Annual training and updates will be provided where required.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION

All reports will be handled confidentially. The identity of the whistleblower will be protected unless disclosure is legally required. Retaliation against whistleblowers is prohibited and will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Staff raising concerns relating to examinations, assessments or qualification delivery in good faith will be protected from victimisation, discrimination or detriment. The centre will support any individual involved in reporting genuine concerns relating to examination integrity.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS

Deliberate false reporting may result in disciplinary action. However, individuals who report concerns in good faith will not be penalised, even if the concern proves unfounded.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures; Centre's Exams Policy; Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as incorporated within the Employment Rights Act 1996). This provides statutory protection for workers making protected disclosures

- Centre Examination Policy
- Internal Appeals Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres (current edition)
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (current edition)
- JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures (current edition)

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with JCQ updates.

REPORTING PROCESS FLOWCHART

