

# Malpractice, Maladministration & Plagiarism Policy

*Excellence • Integrity*

### **Our Mission**

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

### **Our Values**

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,  
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

### **Sparsholt College Group**

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The *Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy* reviewed and approved by the College Curriculum Leadership Group (CLG) in July 2021 and is the current version.

Originator:	Vice Principal Curriculum
EIA:	Conducted August 2021
Located:	College Group Intranet
Due for review:	May for July 2024

## **Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism Policy**

### **Context**

Malpractice and maladministration consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment certification.

These procedures relate to malpractice and/or maladministration in any assessment and certification context and set out the rights and responsibilities with regard to malpractice and/or maladministration of learners and staff of the College.

### **College Statement**

The College has a commitment to the highest standards of quality, honesty, openness and accountability. The College does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice and/or maladministration by:

- Learners
- Staff at Sparsholt/Andover College in connection with any assessments and certification

There is therefore no scope for compromising the reputation of the qualifications and curriculum of the professional/awarding bodies and/or that of the College, as laid out in the Code of Practice.

The College is committed to investigate all cases of failure to abide by its regulations that may constitute malpractice. Where cases of suspected malpractice and/or maladministration are proven, the College is fully committed to taking appropriate action, including applying punitive measures and report suspected malpractice and/or maladministration in order to maintain the integrity of all qualifications.

### **Objective**

The College statement is designed to enable the College, associates, linked institutions and/or awarding bodies to work together in detecting any irregularities and the implementation of appropriate sanctions as set out in the Further Education and/or Higher Education Learner Conduct and Performance Policies and Procedures.

## **MALPRACTICE: Identification**

For the purposes of these procedures, malpractice is defined as any **deliberate** action, neglect or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- the assessment process;
- the integrity of a regulated qualification;
- the validity of a result or certificate;
- the reputation and credibility of the awarding body; or,
- the qualification or the wider qualifications community.

**College malpractice** can include:

- Inadequately secured materials (Exam storage, marking guidance, learner evidence, assessment and IQA records).
- Misuse of assessments, inappropriate adjustments, improper assistance, and manufacturing evidence of competence, fabricating assessment or internal verification records.
- Deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates

Examples of **College malpractice** can include:

- Failing to keep assessment mark schemes secure
- Alteration of assessment mark scheme
- Alteration of an awarding bodies assessment and grading criteria
- 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 staff producing work for the learner
- Use of 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 own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
- Misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment failing to keep learner computer files secure
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration or substitution,
- Failing to keep assessment/examination/test papers secure prior to the assessment /examination/test
- Obtaining unauthorised access to assessment /examination/test material prior to an assessment/examination/test.
- Interfering with coursework/scripts after collection and before dispatch to awarding body/moderator

**Learner/Student Malpractice** - in assessment can occur in:

- The compilation of portfolios.
- The presentation of practical work.
- The preparation and authentication of evidence.

- Conduct during an internal or external assessment

Examples of **learner/student malpractice** can include:

- Plagiarism of any nature. Plagiarism is presenting the ideas, work or words of other people and passing off the work as the learner's own, whether whole or part(s) of another individual's work. This can include artwork, graphics, images, words, computer generated work (including Internet sources), whether published or not, with or without the originator's permission and without acknowledging the source.
- Falsification of assessment evidence or results
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other students to produce work that is submitted as individual work. Likewise, it is also collusion to copy someone else's work and submit it as though it were their own. Both students would be open to a charge of academic malpractice. However, students should not be discouraged from teamwork, as this is an important skill, however the use of minutes and task allocation, etc. are a key part of team work, and this must be made clear to students.
- Copying from another candidate (including the use of ICT to assist copying), or allowing work to be copied
- Deliberate destruction of another's work
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework
- Impersonation: 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, test or examination
- Failure to abide by instructions or advice given by an assessor, supervisor, invigilator, or Awarding Body conditions in relation to an assessment, test or examination.
- Introduction and/or use of unauthorised material or instruments in the examination room or assessment session, e.g. study guides, notes, mobile phones, tablets or other similar electronic devices.
- Disruptive, offensive or inappropriate behaviour.
- Misuse or attempted misuse of examination/assessment material.

The College retains at its discretion to identify further areas of malpractice beyond the areas identified above.

## **MALADMINISTRATION: identification**

For the purposes of these procedures, maladministration is defined as any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration. Examples of maladministration:

- Persistent failure to adhere to our learner registration and certification procedures.
- Persistent failure to adhere to our centre recognition and/or qualification requirements and/or associated actions assigned to the centre
- Late learner registrations (both infrequent and persistent)
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests and/or communications from curriculum area
- Inaccurate claim for certificates
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence
- Withholding of information, by deliberate act or omission, from us which is required

## **Implementation**

The College will use the Further Education and/or Higher Education Learner Conduct and Performance Policies and Procedures with students where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice, maladministration and/or plagiarism have been proven. Where assessment malpractice is proven by awarding authorities/bodies may also impose penalties or sanctions.

The College will use the disciplinary procedure with staff of the College where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice and/or maladministration have been proven. Where assessment malpractice is proven by awarding authorities/bodies may also impose penalties or sanctions.

## **Process of Implementation**

- The College will inform its students of its procedures on assessment malpractice and plagiarism during induction and through handbooks.
- Students will be shown the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites.
- The College staff should include assessment procedures which reduce the opportunity for malpractice.
- Learners should be asked to declare that their work is their own when submitting assessments.
- Incidents of learner assessment malpractice should be reported to the Assistant Principal of the Faculty or Dean of Higher Education.

- Incidents of staff assessment malpractice and/or maladministration should be reported to the Assistant Principal of the Faculty or the Dean of Higher Education and the Head of Learning and Quality.
- When a case of alleged assessment malpractice and/or maladministration has been reported involving staff the incident should be investigated using the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

## **Identification**

### **Malpractice may be identified:**

- At course and unit level when marking relevant work
- At centre level through on-going quality assurance activity and monitoring e.g. internal verification activity.
- At centre level through intelligence, complaints or feedback received e.g. from centre staff, learners etc.
- Through scheduled quality assurance activity and monitoring e.g. external verification/moderation activity
- Through internal examinations sampling
- Through intelligence, complaints or feedback received e.g. from learners, centre staff, whistle blowers or other stakeholders.
- Through information from other organisations e.g. other awarding bodies, sector skills councils or funding agencies etc.
- At regulator level through intelligence, complaints or feedback received.

## **Responsibility: Reporting Malpractice**

- The College accepts the responsibility to report any suspicion of malpractice to the link institutions and/or professional body and will facilitate investigation of the alleged irregularities.
- When dealing with an incident of suspected Malpractice the College will:
  - ensure staff leading the investigation are independent of the staff, students, learners being investigated.
  - inform those who are suspected of malpractice that they are entitled to know the necessary details of the case and possible outcomes.
- In all cases, it will notify the regulatory authorities/awarding bodies/institutions once malpractice has been proven. In certain cases, it will notify the regulatory authorities/awarding bodies/institutions if malpractice is suspected, if this initial notification is required. The College will also indicate the proposed action and an estimated timescale for the investigation to the regulatory authorities of the link institutions/professional bodies maintain confidentiality of the relevant materials and will ensure that they are kept secure and not disclosed to any third parties.

## **Reporting Suspected Cases of Malpractice**

In all cases where a student is suspected of malpractice during an examination or assessment, he/she will first be warned by the invigilator that his/her actions are in breach

of regulations and therefore might constitute malpractice. The student will also be informed that the invigilator is obliged to report his/her (the student's) actions.

The student concerned has the right to provide a statement explaining his/her conduct that will be included in the invigilator's written report. The student is however not obliged to provide a statement before leaving the assessment venue. In such cases, the invigilator will note this in the report. In cases where a student is discovered to be in possession of any unauthorised materials during an examination/assessment, the invigilator will confiscate the materials, with a record the time and point within the script at which the discovery was made, along with a list of the confiscated materials which the student will be asked to sign to confirm its accuracy.

Students will be allowed to continue working for the remainder of the assessment without prejudice to the final outcome. In cases where the assessment invigilator suspects that students may have been communicating/collaborating the invigilator will note on each suspected student's assessment script the time and point within the script at which the discovery was made. Any written evidence relevant to the incident, e.g. confiscated materials, statements from other individuals involved, must accompany the report.

### **Suspected Malpractice by Assessment Venue Staff/Invigilators**

Suspected cases of malpractice by a staff member or invigilator may be reported by students, other assessment venue staff, other assessment invigilators or a member of the public.

Information should be submitted to the Line Manager and Examinations Office. Information should include location, date, title and time of the assessment. In addition where applicable the student's name and his/her student number plus the name of the member of staff in question should also be supplied.

### **Maladministration**

#### **Responsibility: Reporting Maladministration**

Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of at any time must notify the Head of Centre immediately.

In doing so, details should be provided in writing, with the appropriate supporting evidence.

All allegations must include (where possible):

- the nature of the suspected or actual maladministration and associated dates
- details of the qualification, unit or exam
- centre's name, address and number
- candidate's name and registration or enrolment number
- details of centre personnel (e.g. name, job role) if they are involved in the case
- details and outcome of any initial investigation carried out by Sparsholt College or anybody else involved in the case, including any mitigating circumstances



## **Confidentiality**

Sometimes a person making an allegation of maladministration may wish to remain anonymous, although it is always preferable if they reveal their identity and provide us with their contact details. However, if a whistle-blower is concerned about possible adverse consequences that may occur should their identity be revealed to another party, they should inform us that they do not want their identity divulged.

Sparsholt College will always aim to keep the identity of the person making the allegations confidential where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this. We may need to disclose their identity should the allegation lead to issues that need to be taken forward by other parties such as:

- The Police (to investigate or prevent crime)
- The Courts (in connection with any court proceedings)
- Other third parties such as regulatory authorities (in connection with certification)

Once a concern has been raised we have a duty to pursue the matter.

## **Responsibility for the investigation**

The Head of Centre of Sparsholt College must ensure that the staff involved in any internal investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation. The Head of Centre should be involved in all such investigations unless the allegations relate to the Head of Centre. In which case, such investigations should be carried out by an additional Management person of the centre or his/her nominee.

The nominated person will be responsible for ensuring that the investigation is carried out in a prompt and effective manner and in accordance with the procedures in this policy. They will allocate a relevant member of staff to lead the investigation and establish whether or not the maladministration has occurred, and review any supporting evidence received or gathered by the process.

At all times we will ensure that Sparsholt College personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.