

Highfield

**Guidance for Malpractice and
Maladministration**



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been provided by Highfield to help illustrate possible guidance a Highfield approved centre can adopt when identifying and managing forms of malpractice and maladministration.
- 1.2 It is not intended to be prescriptive nor indicate that this is the only approach acceptable to Highfield, nor is it intended to imply that using it will guarantee compliance with Highfield requirements as it is each centre's responsibility to ensure they have in place appropriate internal controls and audit trails.
- 1.3 Whilst this document may suggest a way of undertaking certain activities, its use alone will not automatically confirm compliance. Centres may decide to use this document and its contents to assist them with the delivery of Highfield qualifications and/or tailor it to reflect internal procedures and operational needs.

2. Review arrangements

- 2.1 Highfield will review this document annually as part of our annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation or trends identified from previous allegations.

3. Related Highfield documentation

- 3.1 Please read this guidance note in conjunction with the following documents, all of which set out Highfield's approach that centres must adhere to concerning malpractice and maladministration:
 - 3.1.1 Highfield Centre Agreement;
 - 3.1.2 Highfield Malpractice and Maladministration Policy;
 - 3.1.3 Highfield Examination and Invigilation Procedures;
 - 3.1.4 Highfield Whistleblowing Policy; and
 - 3.1.5 Highfield Plagiarism Policy.

4. Definition of malpractice

- 4.1 Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and/or Highfield procedures and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:
- 4.1.1 the assessment process;
 - 4.1.2 the integrity of a regulated qualification;
 - 4.1.3 the validity of a result or certificate;
 - 4.1.4 the reputation and credibility of Highfield; and/or
 - 4.1.5 the qualification or the wider qualifications community.
- 4.2 Malpractice may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.
- 4.3 For the purpose of this guidance this term also covers misconduct and forms of unnecessary discrimination or bias towards certain individual or groups of learners.

5. Definition of maladministration

- 5.1 Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration within a centre (for example inappropriate learner records).

6. Centre responsibility

- 6.1 It is a centre's responsibility to have in place the following:
- 6.1.1 Robust procedures for preventing and investigating incidents of malpractice or maladministration which are up to date and communicated across the centre, its venues, sub-contractors and third parties.
 - 6.1.2 Regularly review procedures for preventing and investigating incidents of malpractice or maladministration and make any improvements necessary to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose.

- 6.1.3 Take all reasonable steps to investigate any suspected incidents of malpractice or maladministration and rectify any negative impact of these incidents.
- 6.1.4 Take all reasonable steps to prevent incidents of malpractice or maladministration from occurring.
- 6.1.5 Develop an action plan for managing and rectifying the negative impact of any incidents of malpractice or maladministration and make this action plan available to Highfield as required. This plan should also identify any areas of improvement required to ensure the malpractice or maladministration does not recur in the future.
- 6.1.6 Take appropriate and proportionate action against those responsible for the malpractice or maladministration to ensure it does not reoccur in the future.
- 6.1.7 Deliver, in full, the actions required to manage and rectify any identified incidents of malpractice or maladministration.
- 6.1.8 Promptly notify Highfield of any incidents of malpractice or maladministration in line with the requirements of the Highfield Maladministration and Malpractice Policy.
- 6.1.9 Provide access to documents, records, data, staff, third parties, sub-contractors, learners, venues or any other resource required by Highfield during an investigation of centre malpractice or maladministration.
- 6.1.10 Fully co-operate in any internal investigation. This includes, but is not limited to, attending meetings and providing prompt responses to questions directed to your centre.
- 6.1.11 It is important that your staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications and your learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy, and that your centre has arrangements in place to prevent and investigate instances of malpractice and maladministration.

7. Reduction of risk

- 7.1 Whilst it is nearly impossible to completely remove the risk of maladministration or malpractice occurring within centres, we feel the

following would go some way to strengthening a centre's internal arrangements:

- 7.1.1 Ensure all centre staff are aware of Highfield Policies and Procedures;
- 7.1.2 Centre staff have clear roles and responsibilities;
- 7.1.3 There is a documented internal quality assurance procedure and methodology that is clearly in place and is subject to regular internal reviews;
- 7.1.4 There are documented internal standardisation arrangements in place and evidence that these take place at least once a year (if not more);
- 7.1.5 Learners are informed of their roles and responsibilities, and in terms of not doing anything that may be deemed malpractice and jeopardise their potential achievements;
- 7.1.6 All assessment and internal verification activities are accurately recorded and carried out in accordance with their internal quality assurance arrangements and in line with your expectations as outlined in your qualification guides; and
- 7.1.7 All registration and certification records are subject to appropriate internal review before submission to Highfield.

8. Tips for centres

- 8.1 Here are some tips below for centres to be aware of when delivering approved Highfield qualifications. Be aware that this list is for guidance alone and is not exhaustive.
- 8.2 Highfield encourages its approved centres to be 'self-aware' and be proactive in identifying and managing malpractice and maladministration. The list is not intended to be exhaustive:
 - 8.2.1 Inspect the examination room to ensure that the accommodation is suitable, and the seating is arranged in such a way to avoid malpractice;
 - 8.2.2 Ensure that all learning aids (such as wall posters) that may assist learners with the examination are covered or removed;

- 8.2.3 Ensure learners turn off and put away mobile phones, smart devices, laptops and/or any other form of device that could be classed as a learning aid;
- 8.2.4 Ensure absolute silence is maintained throughout the examination; and
- 8.2.5 In the event that an invigilator/assessor observes or suspects a learner of cheating, that learner should be asked to stop. Should the action be considered serious enough, a learner's examination paper and answer sheet should be collected, and the learner asked to leave the examination room. In this latter scenario, the invigilator/assessor must submit a written report to the centre contact who should notify Highfield of the incident.

9. Contact us

- 9.1 If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact your Customer Support Officer directly on 01302 363277 or email info@highfield.co.uk

Document control

Version	Date	Author	Notes
V1	April 2022	Terry Bloor	
V2	October 2023	Terry Bloor	Latest review
V3	January 2024	Terry Bloor	Branding change
V3.1	August 2025	Grace Stansfield	Latest review