

Exams Conflict of Interest Policy 2025/2026

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved/reviewed by Governors – October 2025

Date of next review: October 2026

Key Staff Involved

Role	Names
Exams Officer	Natasha Neal
SLT Exam Lead	David Murphy (Vice Principal)

Introduction

North Oxfordshire Academy is required to have in place a Conflict of Interest policy that enables the centre to identify, manage and mitigate any potential conflicts of interest in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations.

All staff and other individuals associated with the Academy have a duty to be aware of, declare, and help manage any conflict of interest that could compromise the integrity of examinations and assessments.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the integrity and reputation of North Oxfordshire Academy and the qualifications it delivers.
- Ensure compliance with JCQ General Regulations (GR 5.3) and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).
- Provide clear guidance to staff and candidates on recognising, declaring, and managing conflicts of interest.
- Safeguard staff by setting out transparent processes for handling potential conflicts.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by the Academy (full-time, part-time, or casual).
- Any individuals engaged in the management, teaching, delivery, administration, assessment, or support of qualifications.
- Situations where staff members, their relatives, or close associates may be entered for qualifications either at this centre or elsewhere.

Definition of a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation where personal interests or loyalties could, or could be perceived to, compromise the impartial performance of professional duties.

Examples include:

- A member of staff teaching or preparing their own child, relative, or close friend for an examination.
- A member of staff with a family member or close associate entered for exams at the Academy or another centre.
- Exams office staff with family members entered for exams.
- Centre staff themselves being entered for qualifications at the centre or elsewhere.

Who are 'Related People'?

"Related People" includes but is not limited to:

- Immediate family (spouse, partner, child, sibling, parent).
- Step-family, foster family, guardianship arrangements.
- Close friends or associates where privileged information might be shared.
- Relatives or household members with whom the staff member has frequent contact.

Principles

The Academy will:

- Review this policy annually and ensure compliance with JCQ requirements.
- Require all staff to declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest each academic year, and prior to each exam series.
- Ensure all confidential assessment materials remain secure and inaccessible to staff with declared conflicts.
- Maintain accurate records of all declared conflicts and the mitigating actions taken.

Responsibilities

- SLT/Department Leaders: communicate this policy to staff annually and oversee compliance.
- Line Managers: ensure all new staff are informed about this policy as part of induction.
- Exams Officer:
 - Collect and record all declarations of interest.
 - Implement measures to mitigate risks (e.g., reallocating invigilation, securing materials).
 - Liaise with awarding bodies as required by JCQ regulations.
- All Staff: disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest as soon as it arises, even if unsure.

Procedures

1. Declaration – The Exams Officer will circulate a Conflict of Interest Declaration Form (via Microsoft Forms) to all staff annually and prior to each exam series.
2. Recording – All declarations will be logged and reviewed.
3. Actioning – The Exams Officer will implement any necessary measures (e.g., reallocation of invigilation or access restrictions).
4. Reporting – Where required, conflicts will be formally notified to awarding bodies in line with JCQ requirements.
5. Review – Records will be reviewed and updated after each exam series to ensure ongoing compliance.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with:

- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres.
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- Best practice in safeguarding the integrity of qualifications.