



# **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

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# Conflict of Interest Policy

## Introduction

Ysgol Bryn Derw is required to have in place a Conflict of Interest policy that enables us to identify, manage and mitigate any potential conflicts of interest. All staff and other individuals have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest. All personnel involved in the assessment of students, or in administering assessment, are expected to act with the highest standards of probity in this regard.

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff and any other relevant individuals on handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of their roles as teachers, invigilators, and assessment/exam-related administrators. This policy applies to all staff or other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with any of the school assessment/exam related functions.

This policy:

- Defines what is meant by conflict of interest in these circumstances
- Describes the role of conflict of interest in the context of working for the school in an assessment/exam related function
- Sets out which conflicts can be managed and how they should be managed, and those which are considered unmanageable and therefore cannot be allowed.
- Illustrates potential conflict of interest situations, some of which are not obvious

The most important feature of the policy is the instruction that individuals should always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest.

The policy describes how and when such disclosures should be made, that is, as soon as potential or actual conflict is discovered. This should be done by completion of a report at the time (i.e. before activity is carried out). The policy describes the procedures that should be followed and how to handle potential conflicts of interest.

## Scope

This policy applies to staff and other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the assessment-related work/examinations of the school. This includes individuals involved with all aspects of devising, setting, marking, administering, invigilating, internally verifying or any other activity connected with the assessment of candidates and associated supporting resources and services.

The individuals falling within the scope of this policy include full-time, part-time, prorata and support staff of the school and any associate staff including external examiners.

The content of the policy cannot cover every potential conflict and must be interpreted in the light of the particular circumstances of each conflict.

## What is a Conflict of Interest?

A simple definition of conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual or organisation has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances, for example:

- An individual whose personal interests conflict with his/her professional position
- An individual scheduled to assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of friends or relatives

A Conflict of Interest occurs where any member of staff who has access to privileged information, or is responsible for making decisions about assessment outcomes, could potentially use that information or their position to give an unfair advantage to a close friend or relative entered for an

examination/assessment at this or any other centre. The term 'Related People' is used to cover close friends or relatives. A Conflict of Interest also occurs if any member of centre's staff is entered for an examination/assessment.

In determining whether a set of circumstances amounts to a conflict of interest, the test should be whether an outsider, aware of the facts, could reasonably consider that the assessment or internal verification process might be compromised by the potential conflict of interest.

### **Who are 'Related People'?**

'Related People' are those with whom the member of staff has a close relationship. It would certainly include spouses, children and siblings, but would also include close friends, relatives and members of the household where there is regular contact, such that privileged information might be shared inappropriately. A step-relative, cousin, niece, etc would count if the contact with that person was close and frequent.

### **Roles, Responsibilities and Associated Procedures to be followed in the event of an Actual or Perceived Interest**

All relevant staff have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest. It is possible that staff working in any assessment/exam related role might encounter potential conflicts of interest from time to time.

Such situations must be carefully managed to ensure that any conflict of interest does not detrimentally impact on the standards of, or public confidence in the centre's educational provision. Staff can find themselves in potential conflict of interest situations because they are not clear what the correct, auditable processes and procedures are.

- The Conflict of Interest policy is a requirement of the induction of all new teachers, invigilators and assessment/examination related support staff, to ask of any potential conflicts of interest. If a new situation arises, teachers, invigilators and support staff must notify the school of any students that attend the school who are family members, relatives or close friends.
- Any day-to-day concerns identified by an individual should be raised with a member of SLT.
- Where there is a notified potential conflict of interest for an individual, the individual and line manager must document this carefully, together with those activities that must be avoided to prevent the school being brought into disrepute. A declaration of a Conflict of Interest Form should be signed by both the individual and the member of SLT, then brought to the attention of the Mr Richard Drew, Headteacher, where documents will be retained for audit purposes.
- Any concerns that the individual feels are urgent should be communicated immediately to Mr Richard Drew, Headteacher and may be done so in confidence.

### **Handling Potential Conflicts of Interest**

The following are examples of potential conflicts of interest from different areas of the school. These notes are intended to be helpful to staff in making decisions that relate to potential conflict of interest situations in their day-to-day work.

- If a teaching member of staff is involved in any way with the development of a secure assessment for either internal or national use, he/she cannot make use of the knowledge of that assessment in any teaching or learning activity.
- Teachers, invigilators and assessment/exam-related administrators should not have the responsibility to ensure the security and confidentiality of all assessment documents including examination papers.
- Learning and teaching materials should not be based on live examination or other assessment materials (although they can make use of past examination or other assessment materials)

- A member of staff should not be asked to assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of a student who is a family member, other relative or close friend
- A member of staff should not make assessment materials available to individuals, whether or not students of the school, when not specifically tasked with assessing them as part of a timetabled activity

### **Procedures to resolve Conflicts of Interest**

These should be a matter of common sense. In the case of assessors or verifiers then other personnel from Ysgol Bryn Derw will be used instead.

Similarly, where the conflict sits with the Quality Nominee / Assistant Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher then another suitably qualified member of staff would be used.

Where the conflict sits with the Headteacher then the Chair of Governors would be informed and additional safeguards would be put in place including, if needed, the Chair of Governors appointing a temporary replacement for the Head of Centre's role in respect of assessment and qualifications.

Ysgol Bryn Derw will review its policies and processes annually to ensure that all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest are managed and resolved.