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Cambridge International Education provides qualifications to nearly a million students each year at thousands of schools in 160 countries. We take the security of our exams extremely seriously. The administration of Cambridge exams is tightly controlled, especially in respect of question paper security.

As you may know, there have been reports this year that exam papers from several syllabuses were circulated before the exam.

We understand that many candidates and families have been frustrated and worried by these reports, and – quite understandably – wanted certainty as soon as possible. It is our policy that we do not comment on such allegations during the exam series, so that candidates can focus on preparing for upcoming exams. It is also important that we have time to carry out our investigations thoroughly.

We are very grateful to schools, candidates and families for their patience during this time. Now that the exam series has finished, we can provide more information.

Our dedicated Exam Security Team has investigated every allegation and concern that was shared with us. Many of the reports of question papers shared before the exam turned out to be false, and there have been malicious attempts to undermine the exams and to disturb and upset candidates. It is also clear that there have been attempts to scam money from candidates in exchange for fake papers.

However, our investigations found some credible evidence of malpractice. Parts of three exam papers were shared shortly before the exam was taken. The three affected papers were:

- Cambridge International AS & A Level Mathematics Paper 12, where one question was shared before the exam was taken
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Mathematics Paper 42, where parts of two questions were shared before the exam was taken
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Computer Science Paper 22, where parts of one question were shared before the exam was taken.

In all three cases we found no evidence that the whole paper had been circulated in advance. Copies of the whole paper that were sent to us had been obtained after the exam had been taken.

We appreciate that most candidates did not attempt to see question papers before the exam. Our priority is to make sure these candidates receive a fair and reliable grade which reflects their hard work, and their performance in their exams. That means making sure those who cheated receive no advantage, so that candidates applying to university compete on an equal basis.

In all three cases we will mark the papers as usual but will discount the questions shared in advance. We will give full marks to all candidates for those questions. This approach has several advantages:

- we do not take marks away from any candidate
- candidates' answers to the questions that remained secure count towards their final result • the questions concerned do not differentiate performance of one candidate from another • the total mark for the paper remains the same.

There are enough marks remaining in the exams to make sure that the grades we award will meet our high standards for accuracy and reliability. All candidates who have taken the paper will be treated in the same way.

This approach will tend to push candidates' total marks upwards, and we will consider this when grading

We have the highest quality standards and rigorous exam security regulations, and all Cambridge schools must ensure they understand and meet them. This includes strict requirements for secure handling and storage of question papers before and on exam day. In addition, we have a range of other measures which includes providing all question papers in tamper-proof packets with enhanced security features and carrying out a large number of unannounced and detailed exam day inspections each series.

Through our investigations, we have identified the source of each leak and are taking action against those involved.

We understand and share the frustration and disappointment felt by many candidates that question papers have been dishonestly stolen and shared, violating our regulations and principles.

Not only are we making sure candidates receive fair and reliable results, as we have described, we are already taking action against those who stole the papers. We know schools will want to explain our approach clearly to students and families. We have written a letter with a clear explanation to share with them if you wish.

I would also like to reassure you that, before every exam series, we carry out extensive and detailed planning to review our exam security arrangements. The security of our exams is of the utmost importance. As usual, we will review and plan security arrangements before the next exam series.

We are very grateful for your patience during this exam series, and for your support as we help candidates to understand the measures we are taking.

Best wishes

Anthony Dawson

Director of Assessment Standards