

4 November 2013

Stephen Evans  
National Secular Society  
25 Red Lion Square  
London  
WC1R 4RL

BY E-MAIL ONLY: [admin@secularism.org.uk](mailto:admin@secularism.org.uk)

Our Ref : F/254  
Your Ref :

Dear Mr Evans

## Request for Information

I refer to your recent request for information received by Ofqual on 8 October 2013 and made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). Your request also constitutes a request under the Data Protection Act 1998 (the DPA) and we have also considered our response in line with the DPA as appropriate.

### 1. Your Request

You requested the following information:-

*I would like to make a FOI request for all correspondence since 1 January 2013 between Ofqual, the Department for Education and the OCR exam board concerning allegations and investigations into exam malpractice or maladministration at Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls' School.*

### 2. Duties under FOIA and the DPA and how they relate to each other

FOIA provides individuals or organisations with the right to request information held by a public authority. Ofqual, as a public authority, is subject to FOIA. Under FOIA, Ofqual must tell an applicant whether it holds the information, and must normally supply it within 20 working days, in the format requested, unless an exemption applies.

Under FOIA, public authorities have two duties to individuals requiring information: firstly to confirm whether or not they hold the information requested, and secondly to provide a copy of that information unless one of the exemptions under the Act applies.

We confirm that on this occasion information of the type you have requested is held by Ofqual.

I can also confirm that some of the information that you have requested contains your personal information for the purposes of the DPA.

The personal data of an applicant is exempt from disclosure under section 40(1) of FOIA. Requests for applicants own personal information should instead be dealt with as DPA subject access requests. This is the case even if the applicant has not specified that a request is being made under the DPA.

To the extent therefore that the information you have requested is your own personal information, we have treated your request as being made under the DPA. The remaining information which falls under your request but which does not constitute your personal information has been dealt with under the FOIA.

In order to locate personal data held which is within the scope of your data subject access request under section 7 of the DPA we have contacted a number of teams within the Regulation Directorate at Ofqual.

I can also confirm that all of the personal information which we have identified is contained in the attached documents unless it is subject to one of the exemptions detailed below.

In line with our wider obligations under the DPA, I can also confirm that your personal data which we hold was processed for the purpose of dealing with the allegations of exam malpractice at Yesodey Hatorah girls' secondary school that you alerted Ofqual to.

### **3. Our response**

We confirm that on this occasion some of the information of the type you request is held by Ofqual and where information is held this is enclosed. We consider that some of the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure and we have set out our reasons for this below. Where possible, we have redacted this information from documents and have disclosed the remaining information. All of the redacted information has been withheld for the reasons set out in section 4 of this letter. Please note that some information has been withheld as it is outside the scope of your request.

### **4. Exemption for third party personal information**

#### **a) Third party personal information and the DPA**

Some of the information you have requested constitutes third party personal data as defined by the DPA as it relates to living, identifiable individuals. This information includes the names, job titles, email addresses and telephone numbers for members of Ofqual, OCR and DfE staff.

We have considered our obligations under the DPA with respect to third party personal information.

Section 7(4) of the DPA provides that if an organisation cannot comply with a request without disclosing information relating to another individual who can be identified from that information, then there is no obligation to comply with the request unless:

1. the third party has consented to the disclosure; or
2. it is reasonable in all the circumstances to comply with the request without the consent of the third party individual.

Section 7(4) of the DPA is however only relevant if information about a third party individual is necessarily part of the information which the requesting individual is entitled to.

Ofqual has considered whether it is possible to comply with your request without revealing information which relates to and identifies a third party individual and considers that it can do so. This is because the third party information only relates to members of staff who have dealt with the allegations and does not relate directly to you. To the extent that third party information falls within your request therefore, we have only considered whether this information should be disclosed under the FOIA.

#### **b) Third party personal information and the FOIA**

Section 40(2) of the FOIA provides that personal data is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA if that disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in the DPA. Under the FOIA, Ofqual is therefore required to consider whether the disclosure of the information would be fair in terms of the data protection principles contained in the DPA.

Schedule 2, condition 6 of the DPA permits disclosure if it is necessary for the purposes of legitimate interests pursued by the data controller or by the third party or parties to whom the data are disclosed, except where the processing is unwarranted in any particular case by reason of prejudice to the rights and freedoms or legitimate interests of the data subject.

As disclosure under the FOIA is considered disclosure to the public at large and not to the individual applicant, Ofqual is required to balance the legitimate public interest in disclosure against the interests of the individual whose data it is. In contrast with other exemptions under FOIA, when considering the public interest in disclosure there is no assumption of disclosure in relation to section 40.

Following the decision of the Information Tribunal in *Corporate Officer of the House of Commons v Information Commissioner and Leapman, Brooke and Thomas* (EA/2007/0060 etc; 26 February 2008), Ofqual has considered the following in assessing what personal information it can disclose under FOIA:

1. there must be a legitimate public interest in disclosure;
2. the disclosure must be necessary to meet that public interest; and
3. the disclosure must not cause unwarranted harm to the interests of the individual.

Ofqual has considered the information you have requested in terms of the above tests. Whereas Ofqual acknowledges that there may be some interest in terms of knowing which individuals have been involved with a specific investigation, we do not consider that there is a wider public interest which would be met by disclosing this information. This is because this information relates to individuals who are dealing with one specific complaint relevant to a small number of individuals and organisations. Ofqual does not consider that the personal information adds any significant further information to the information being disclosed.

Ofqual has also taken into account that in most cases the individuals whose information falls within your request are not in positions whereby they are senior decision makers and we do not consider that they would have an expectation of being identified publically.

We also consider that staff at Ofqual and at other organisations, including OCR and DfE, who are involved in investigations could be adversely affected if their personal information was made public due to the particular sensitivity of their roles. We consider that publication of their personal information could therefore cause unwarranted harm.

Ofqual has therefore determined that for the reasons set out above it is reasonable to withhold the names, job descriptions and contact details of members of staff who have been involved in dealing with your complaint and have redacted that information.

Where individuals information is contained in the documents which we are disclosing, we have redacted the personal information but indicated, as a manuscript note, which organisation was the sender or recipient of that item of correspondence.

## **5. Further assistance and complaints**

If you are unhappy with the way in which your request has been handled you have the right to request an internal review. You can request an internal review by contacting:-

Alison Townsend  
Board Secretariat Manager  
Ofqual  
Spring Place  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue

Coventry, CV5 6UB  
(alison.townsend@ofqual.gov.uk).

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you can apply to the Information Commissioner. Complaints to the Information Commissioner should be sent to:-

FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Townsend', written in a cursive style.

**Alison Townsend**  
Board Secretariat Manager  
Direct line 024 7671 6726

Okval

**From:** DfE  
**Sent:** 17 July 2013 12:10  
**To:** OfqualInfo  
**Subject:** RE: DfE correspondence 2013/0041908 (National Secular Society) - exam malpractice allegations

That's very kind Okval. I'll arrange for a suitable response from this end and inform you when despatched.

DfE.

**Tel:**                      **Ext:**  
**Web:** [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education

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**From:** OfqualInfo [mailto:info@ofqual.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 17 July 2013 10:39  
**To:** DfE  
**Subject:** RE: DfE correspondence 2013/0041908 (National Secular Society) - exam malpractice allegations

Hi DfE.

We haven't had any complaints or allegations of malpractice about this issue and we would expect exam boards to take action if teachers were interfering with exam papers prior to candidates sitting the exam. I think the issue of redacting exam questions is definitely something we would be interested in and would look into it if we had specific evidence of where this is happening.

I am happy respond to that particular point and if you let me know when your response has been sent I will arrange for something to go from Ofqual.

Thanks,

, Ofqual

- Direct: 0300 303 3346 • Office: 0300 303 3344
- 1410 Spring Place, Herald Avenue, Coventry Business Park • Coventry • West Midlands • CV5 6UB

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk) • [twitter.com/ofqual](https://twitter.com/ofqual) • [www.facebook.com/ofqual](https://www.facebook.com/ofqual)

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**From:** DfE  
**Sent:** 17 July 2013 09:47  
**To:** OfqualInfo  
**Subject:** DfE correspondence 2013/0041908 (National Secular Society) - exam malpractice allegations  
**Importance:** High

Hi David

Another case I'd like Ofqual to look at for me please (the highlighted sections of the attached are the relevant ones).

Policy colleagues here can deal with the points around the GCSE curriculum content in Biology, but are the allegations about the practice of redacting exam questions to suit certain religious beliefs something that Ofqual can respond to? You may have received some soft intelligence about this rather than DfE, so grateful for your advice.

A response by this afternoon would be very helpful. Much obliged.

DfE

**Tel:**                      **Ext:**                      :

**Web:** [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education

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challenging religious privilege

national  
secular  
society

2 August 2013

Ofqual,  
Spring Place,  
Herald Avenue,  
Coventry  
CV5 6UB.

Sent via email [info@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:info@ofqual.gov.uk)

25 Red Lion Square  
London WC1R 4RL

TEL: 020 7404 3126

FAX: 0870 762 8971

EMAIL: [enquiries@secularism.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@secularism.org.uk)

WEB: [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk)

To whom it may concern

### **Concerns over exam malpractice at Yesodey Hatorah girls' secondary school**

In June we wrote to the Department for Education (DfE) to express concern about an admission by Rabbi Avraham Pinter, principal of Yesodey Hatorah Charedi Jewish Voluntary Aided School, that "sometimes Charedi schools, if they find anything in the paper which could be offensive to parents, advise children to avoid that question". He was responding to unconfirmed reports that a question deemed unsuitable by Charedi teachers in a GCSE science exam this year was blacked out for pupils who sat it. The comments attributed to Rabbi Pinter were made in an article concerning how evolution in the GCSE science curriculum could pose problems for strictly Orthodox schools.<sup>1</sup>

In a reply from the DfE (which we understand Ofqual was copied in with), we were informed that neither the department nor ministers have any role in following up specific allegations of exam malpractice. The DfE did however stress that both the department and Ofqual take matters of exam malpractice very seriously.

As the reply from the DfE stated, the integrity of the exam system needs to be safeguarded, so that the general public can have confidence in the value of qualifications that all students take. We are also keen to ensure that children's education is not being compromised when scientific facts are incompatible with the ethos of particular schools.

We therefore call on Ofqual to fully investigate the comments attributed to Rabbi Avraham Pinter and the allegations of exam malpractice at Yesodey Hatorah. We would also like to enquire as to exam board used by the school, as a request for this information to the school has gone unanswered.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Evans  
Campaigns Manager

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<sup>1</sup> "Charedi fear over Gove education reforms" By Simon Rocker, Jewish Chronicle, June 14, 2013  
<http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/108623/charedi-fear-over-gove-education-reforms>

**From:** DFE  
**Sent:** 01 July 2013 08:50  
**To:** DFE  
**Cc:** DFE  
**Subject:** FW:  
school science lessons

Reports of exclusion of key scientific concepts from

Hi DFE

Please could you log this case as a TO?

Many thanks,

DFE

.....

- DFE

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_ - **Ext:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email:** \*\*\* DFE

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

**From:** PS, Sec-OF-STATE  
**Sent:** 28 June 2013 16:25  
**To:**  
**Subject:** -

: Reports of exclusion of key scientific concepts from school

science lessons

For echo please

**Our working with Ministers pack is now available here**

- DFE

Secretary of State's Private Office

Department for Education

email: DFE

[www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Does this email or any attachments need to be "on the record" ?

Please remember that in line with Cabinet Office and Departmental guidance, Private Office does not retain records relating to specific policy areas and any records must be retained by the relevant policy team.

**From:** Stephen Evans [<mailto:stephen.evans@secularism.org.uk>]

**Sent:** 28 June 2013 16:00

**To:** PS, Sec-OF-STATE

**Subject:** Reports of exclusion of key scientific concepts from school science lessons

For the attention of The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Please find attached a letter detailing our concerns about reports of the exclusion of key scientific concepts from school science lessons.

With kind regards,  
Stephen

Stephen Evans  
Campaigns manager  
National Secular Society  
25 Red Lion Square  
London WC1R 4RL

T: 020 7404 3126

E: [stephenmevans@ymail.com](mailto:stephenmevans@ymail.com)

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Thank you for your email of 28 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, about reports of exclusion of key scientific concepts from school science lessons. I am sure you will appreciate that the Secretary of State receives a vast amount of correspondence and is unable to reply to each one personally. It is for this reason I have been asked to reply.

The department is committed to making sure that all children receive a high quality science education. The national curriculum ensures that pupils will be taught the scientific knowledge, such as evolution, which is essential to sound understanding of, and progression in, biology and other scientific disciplines. Within the scientific community, there is a clearly-established consensus that modern evolutionary theory is the most robust and well-evidenced explanation available for the diversity of life on Earth, and that there are currently no scientifically credible alternative explanations. On this basis, the government's clear and settled policy is that it should be taught in schools as an essential element of a rigorous, modern scientific education. Therefore, it is included in the new national curriculum from key stage 2 onwards and it is part of the reformed GCSEs for biology and combined double award in science.

Turning to the allegations you have raised about unconfirmed reports of exam question papers being altered to redact certain phrases or terms, both the department and the independent regulator for exams and qualifications (Ofqual) take matters of exam malpractice very seriously. The integrity of the exam system needs to be safeguarded, so that the general public can have confidence in the value of qualifications that all students take.

However, neither the department nor ministers have any role in following up specific allegations of exam malpractice. It is the responsibility firstly of exam boards to investigate potential integrity breaches of their exams and as such any concerns should be reported to the relevant exam board. Therefore, if you have any substantiated evidence of your concerns about the practice undertaken in exams by Charedi schools, then I would encourage you to contact the relevant exam board.

I am providing a copy of this reply to Ofqual, who may wish to respond directly on its regulatory role in the exam system, including when allegations of exam malpractice are presented to it.

Thank you for raising these important issues.

Ofqual

---

**From:** DfE  
**Sent:** 19 July 2013 11:46  
**To:** OfqualInfo  
**Subject:** Stephen Evans  
**Attachments:** Echo Case 2013.0041908 Evans email.docx; Echo Case 2013.0041908 Stephen Evans.pdf; Stephen Evans 18.7.13 National Secular Society.docx

F.A.O. Ofqual

I have been asked by the Qualifications and Assessment Team to forward Mr Evans correspondence and our reply to you.  
Please could you reply directly to Mr Evans.  
Many thanks for your help.

DfE

 Department for Education

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challenging religious privilege

28 June 2013

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT

Sent via email

national  
secular  
society

25 Red Lion Square  
London WC1R 4RL  
TEL: 020 7404 3126  
FAX: 0870 762 8971  
EMAIL: [enquiries@secularism.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@secularism.org.uk)  
WEB: [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk)

Dear Mr Gove

**Reports of exclusion of key scientific concepts from school science lessons**

We very much welcome your proposals for a stronger focus on evolution in Biology as set out in the recently published draft details of new GCSE content in core academic subjects.

We were therefore alarmed to read the comments of an adviser to Orthodox schools, in the 14 June 2013 edition of the *Jewish Chronicle*, where he is quoted as saying: "I don't see Charedi [ultra-Orthodox] schools going along with it. It is something that flies in face of their ethos and culture. It is clear this kind of proposal is definitely going to create difficulties for Charedi schools."

Even more disturbing however, was the admission by Rabbi Avraham Pinter, principal of Yesodey Hatorah Charedi Jewish Voluntary Aided School, that "sometimes Charedi schools, if they find anything in the paper which could be offensive to parents, advise children to avoid that question". He was responding to unconfirmed reports that a question deemed unsuitable by Charedi teachers in a GSCE science exam this year was blacked out for pupils who sat it.

We are keen to ensure that children's education is not being compromised when scientific facts are incompatible with the ethos of particular schools.

We are concerned that Charedi schools may not be the only schools where this is an issue. In free schools, academies and private schools, where the National Curriculum is not compulsory, the risk of children's education being compromised by a schools' "ethos and culture" is likely to be significantly greater.

We would therefore like to know what measures your department is taking to ensure that children's entitlement to learn about evolution – the most important idea underlying biological science – is being is never undermined by religious considerations an any school, state funded or otherwise.

We also urge you to fully investigate the allegation that questions deemed unsuitable by Charedi teachers have been blacked out in pupils' exam papers.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Porteous Wood  
Executive Director

particularly sensitive and requires an industry wide approach.

Having examined the scripts we are confident that the candidates have not received an advantage and in view of this we are planning on releasing their results on Monday 2 September. In our deliberations we have reached the conclusion that the most proportionate and reasonable approach would be to come to an agreement with the centres concerned which will protect the future integrity of our examinations - by stipulating how, when and where the redactions take place - but at the same time respect their need to do this in view of their religious beliefs. We believe that we need to be mindful of the fact that if we do not come to an agreement with the centres we could be seen as creating a barrier to accessing the examinations for their candidates. I have also attached a copy of our proposed letter to the centres for your information. In this letter we are also seeking assurances that the content of the question papers in question was not shared more widely as a means to addressing the security concerns mentioned above.

We are still carrying out investigations to reassure ourselves that the integrity of the exams was not undermined through the actions of the school opening the papers and not following due process to protect the security of the examinations. We will keep you updated as to the outcome of these investigations.

**Mark Dawe**

*Chief Executive and Responsible Officer*

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)

1 Hills Road

Cambridge

CB1 2EU

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_


**Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

[mark.dawe@ocr.org.uk](mailto:mark.dawe@ocr.org.uk)

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**Regarding**

 OCR- event notification- Malpractice in faith school

**Owner**

 *Olavul*

**Duration**

**Priority**

Normal




**Due**



**Category**

**Sub-Category**

**E-mail****Proposed Notification of possible bre...****E-mail**

**Confidential** No

**From**  Mark Dawe **Cc**  Okwal  
 OCR

**To**  Event Notification; **Bcc**  EventNotification

**Direction** Incoming

**Subject** Proposed Notification of possible breach of security and alleged malpractice

This is a notification under General Condition B3 B3.2 (b) concerning a breach of confidentiality in, any assessment materials and B3.2 (g) where we believe that there has been an incident of malpractice or maladministration, which could either invalidate the award of a qualification which it makes available or could affect another awarding organisation.

On the 15 August OCR was contacted by the National Secular Society informing us that the Principal of Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girl's School (centre number 10454) had confirmed, in an article published in the Jewish Chronicle, that candidates are advised to avoid questions that could be offensive to their parents (a copy of the letter from the National Secular Society and the article from the Jewish Chronicle are attached). In response to this OCR's Malpractice Team has checked the centre Science papers (units B711/02 and B711/01) and found evidence that questions had been redacted. A letter was sent to the Head of the Centre on the same date requesting an investigation. On the 27 August the Headteacher, Mrs Rachel Pinter, responded confirming their practice of opening the exam papers in the exam room with the candidates present; the Headteacher checks the contents and instructs the invigilators to cover up aspects of the question paper that deal with topics included within the national curriculum but which conflict with their religious beliefs practised by the school. The centre is under the impression that this is a practice that OCR (and presumably other exam boards) was aware of and accepting of but we have been unable to find any agreement of that nature (a copy of the letter from the centre is also attached).





— redacted - out of scope of request —

The centre has their results for the units concerned set to Q (pending). *(out of scope of request)* for centre 10454 it is 52 candidates.

We are notifying you of this event for two reasons. The first is the risk to the security and integrity of the questions papers concerned as staff have access to the papers in advance of the examination start date do not follow JCQ code of practice designed to secure the integrity of examinations. The second is the fact that this has significantly wider implications and could apply to other faith schools who follow this practice of which we and other exam boards are unaware, and clearly involves issues of teaching of the national curriculum and Ofsted. Therefore we feel this matter is



**Attachments**

 E-Mail Attachments: <b>Activity Attachment Associated View</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>File Name</u>	<u>File Size (Bytes)</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	 2x attachments withheld - out of scope of request	23,688
<input type="checkbox"/>		14,475
<input type="checkbox"/>		95,970

1 - 3 of 3 (0 selected) Page 1

**Attachments**

**Details**

Status Reason **Received**

challenging religious privilege

15 August 2013

OCR  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2EU

Sent via email [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

national  
**secular**  
society



25 Red Lion Square  
London WC1R 4RL

TEL: 020 7404 3126

FAX: 0870 762 8971

EMAIL: [enquiries@secularism.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@secularism.org.uk)

WEB: [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk)

To whom it may concern

### Concerns over exam malpractice at Yesodey Hatorah girls' secondary school

We would like to raise concern over possible exam malpractice at Yesodey Hatorah girls' secondary school.

Our concerns follow an admission by Rabbi Avraham Pinter, principal of Yesodey Hatorah Charedi Jewish Voluntary Aided School, that "sometimes Charedi schools, if they find anything in the paper which could be offensive to parents, advise children to avoid that question".

He was responding to unconfirmed reports that a question deemed unsuitable by Charedi teachers in a GCSE science exam this year was blacked out for pupils who sat it. The comments attributed to Rabbi Pinter were made in a Jewish Chronicle article concerning how evolution in the GCSE science curriculum could pose problems for strictly Orthodox schools.<sup>1</sup>

We believe the integrity of the exam system needs to be safeguarded, so that the general public can have confidence in the value of qualifications that all students take. We are also keen to ensure that children's education is not compromised when scientific facts are incompatible with the ethos of a particular school.

In correspondence with the National Secular Society, Ofqual have confirmed that they would consider teachers blacking out questions on exam papers as malpractice and that they would expect an exam board to take appropriate action. We believe the unconfirmed reports of blacking out, taken with the admission from the principal of Yesodey Hatorah, give reasonable grounds for our concerns to be investigated fully.

We understand Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School took OCR GCSE Science examinations in the June 2013 examination series. We therefore call on you to fully investigate the comments attributed to Rabbi Avraham Pinter and the reports of blacking out at Yesodey Hatorah.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Evans  
Campaigns Manager

<sup>1</sup> "Charedi fear over Gove education reforms" By Simon Rucker, Jewish Chronicle, June 14, 2013  
<http://www.thejcc.com/news/uk-news/108623/charedi-fear-over-gove-education-reforms>

## Appendix

### Charedi fear over Gove education reforms

By *Simon Roker*

Created 06/14/2013 - 12:30

Education Secretary Michael Gove's wish to put a greater focus on evolution in the GCSE science curriculum could pose problems for strictly Orthodox schools, a Jewish education consultant warned this week.

The minister announced the move on Tuesday as part of his reforms to raise the standard of school exams.

But Michael Cohen, an adviser to Orthodox schools, said: "I don't see Charedi schools going along with it. It is something that flies in face of their ethos and culture. It is clear this kind of proposal is definitely going to create difficulties for Charedi schools."

Mr Gove's plans to make evolution a compulsory part of the primary school curriculum have already caused consternation among Charedi educators and the National Association of Jewish Orthodox Schools has lobbied his department for a rethink.

A draft primary curriculum says that young children should study fossils as evidence of evolution, know about Charles Darwin and understand how the human skeleton has evolved "since we separated from other primates".

While modern Orthodox schools feel able to reconcile evolution with Jewish teachings on creation, Charedi schools regard it as opposed to traditional doctrine.

If greater emphasis were put on evolution at GCSE, Charedi pupils would be likely to have to sacrifice marks by ignoring the topic.

Mr Cohen believed that Jewish schools generally would welcome the thrust of Mr Gove's reforms for "a more rigorous and academic approach".

But he added: "It is important to recognise that Charedi schools have been set up by their community and parents send them to these schools where they know they will be kept away from delicate, sensitive or problematic issues like evolution."

Unconfirmed reports on the internet this week suggested that a question deemed unsuitable by Charedi teachers in a GSCE science exam this year was blacked out for pupils who sat it.

Rabbi Avraham Pinter, principal of the state-aided Chasidic girls' secondary school, Yesodey Hatorah, said he was unaware of the details of science papers this year.

But he confirmed that "sometimes Charedi schools, if they find anything in the paper which could be offensive to parents, advise children to avoid that question".

He said that he expected Charedi concerns to be raised in consultations about the reforms. "We are confident that the government will take into consideration the educational priorities of parents and children of all faiths, and ensure that this topic is covered in a balanced and sensitive manner."

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**Source URL:** <http://www.thejoc.com/news/uk-news/108623/charedi-fear-over-gove-education-reforms>

**E-mail**

**RE: Proposed Notification of possible...**

**E-mail**

**Confidential**

No

**From**



Okaval

**Cc**



oel



oel

**To**



oel

**Bcc**

**Direction**

Outgoing

**Subject**

RE: Proposed Notification of possible breach of security and alleged malpractice - notified to you on 30 August Ofqual:0056104

Okaval

Thanks for the update and for sharing your statement to PA. We have not yet received any enquiries from the media about this but we will let you know if we do.

In terms of the wider issues, we do not believe that there is much we can do here. You are managing the maladministration/malpractice issues for recent and future series, and you have already raised the issue with JCQ for wider discussion. We would be interested to hear the outcomes of those discussions.

If these are state schools, then it is for DfE and Ofsted to consider the implications of the schools not teaching the National Curriculum to students. And I note that you are intending to raise this with them.

Kind regards,

, Ofqual

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**From:** Ok  
**Sent:** 24 September 2013 17:31  
**To:** Okaval

Cc: I OCR & Q

**Subject:** Proposed Notification of possible breach of security and alleged malpractice - notified to you on 30 August

Orval

We spoke on 2 September about this case and you said that Ofqual wants to go away and think about the wider repercussions and the respective roles of Ofsted, DfE and others and will come back to OCR. Neither you nor I believe that this is an isolated case but worry that it has not been raised before.

I just want to bring to your attention the following:

The national press agency PA News have just got in touch about this issue as the NSS have forwarded our correspondence with the NSS.

I am going to go back to PA News with the following statement, which is a shortened version of our email to the NSS. I'll also let Ofqual comms and DfE comms know that there is now media interest in the issue. I'll let you know of any further developments.

OCR

A spokesperson for OCR said:

**"Ensuring the integrity of the exam system is of paramount importance to OCR and we will always take all the steps necessary to protect it. On this occasion we conducted a thorough investigation into the centre concerned and found that no candidate gained an advantage. As a result we did not penalise any candidate.**

**"We have tried to respect the religious and cultural sensitivities of this community whilst protecting the integrity of our exams. That said, we do not consider obscuring aspects of question papers to be good exam practice. We are raising the matter with the Department for Education and Ofsted as well as our fellow Awarding Bodies, through the Joint Council for Qualifications. We are also in the process of agreeing safeguards with the centre to ensure good exam practice in the context of today's pluralistic society. Ofqual are also fully aware of our investigation and its outcome."**

Please keep me in the loop as to how this develops. Mark Dawe raised this with JCQ last week.

Kind regards

OCR



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Regarding  [OCR- event notification- Malpractice in faith school](#)  
 Owner  *Oliver*  
 Duration Priority Normal  
 Due  
 Category Sub-Category

**Attachments**

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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected) <span style="float: right;">Page 1</span>	

**Attachments**

**Details**

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