

Testwood School

Word Processor Policy

Key Responsibility area:	RM
Next Review:	February 2026
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Revision History

Version	Date	Amendments	Initials
V1	17.03.22		JB
V1.1	11.01.23	Review dates updated	JB
V1.2	07.02.24	Updated guidance in line with the renewed JCQ Guidance	RM
V1.3	11.02.25	Updated guidance in line with the renewed JCQ Guidance	RM
V1.4	27.01.26	Updated guidance in line with the renewed JCQ Guidance	RM

The policy is divided into sections:

1. Introduction/Purpose of the policy
2. Principles of the policy
3. The use of a word processor (word processor)
4. Word processors and their programmes
5. Accommodating word processors in exams
6. Appendix 1 – Criteria for awarding and allocating word processors for examinations

Introduction/Purpose

This policy sets out our approach on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments, according to the updated Joint Council for Qualifications Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance. 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026.

Principles in using a word processor

Testwood School complies with the Chapter 5 JCQ Guidance – **Access arrangements and adjustments (5.8 Word processor)**.

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment, a word processor in this instance, is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCOs must consider the need for a word processor on a subject-by-subject basis.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course, having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. However, in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

The use of a word processor must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- support lessons;
- intervention strategies;
- in internal school tests/examinations;
- mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment.

As subjects vary, leading to different demands of the candidate, support may be needed in just one or two subjects or all. Evidence is needed for every subject to show a history of word processor usage. It cannot suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations.

The SENCO and Specialist Assessor must work with teaching and support staff and the exams officer to ensure that a word processor is used for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise before his/her first examination.

If a candidate has never made use of a word processor, then it is not his/her normal way of working. The SENCO may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage. (The SENCO and Exams Officer would have monitored the use of the arrangement in internal school tests and mock examinations.)

The use of a Word Processor

Testwood School complies with Chapter 5 of the JCQ Guidance.

Testwood allows the use of a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, the candidate's quality of language significantly improves when using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. (This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)

Where the student has approval for the use of a scribe and where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to his/her needs, the candidate may alternatively use:

- a word processor with the spelling and grammar check switched on; or
- a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check switched on.

The use of word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

A candidate may use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. NB Examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen.

Testwood School complies with the JCQ regulations on the use of the word processor as outlined in the *Instructions for conducting examinations (commonly known as the JCQ 'ICE' document)*:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A word processor:

- must be used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. When needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- must be in good working order at the time of the examination;
- must be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required;
- must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the

examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;

- F. must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused;
- G. must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- H. must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- I. must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- J. must not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;
- K. must not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- L. must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- M. must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

Accommodating Word processors in examinations

- Candidates using word processors (including laptops) are internally accommodated in a separate venue away from the Sports Hall.
- Invigilation cover will be suitable and sufficient for the number of candidates in the room.

Appendix 1**Criteria for awarding and allocating word processors**

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

JCQ Guidance:

Examples – Word processor

- A candidate who cannot write legibly because she has significant learning difficulties asks to use a word processor in her examinations. It is her normal means of producing written work within the centre because her teachers cannot read her writing. She is very proficient in using a word processor. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in her examinations.
- A candidate does not have a learning difficulty but is a 'messy' writer. His handwriting is hard to decipher. He requests the use of a word processor. This is granted by the SENCo because it reflects his normal way of working within the centre.
- A candidate wishes to use a word processor since this is her normal way of working within the centre. However, the candidate additionally wishes to use the spelling and grammar check facility. Given that she does not meet the published criteria for a scribe, the candidate cannot use the spelling and grammar check facility. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out in the JCQ 'ICE' document.
- A candidate who has significant learning difficulties has quite legible writing. However, he makes many omissions and cannot order his ideas correctly. His written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. He requests a word processor and this is granted by the SENCo. The use of a word processor allows him to correct text, sequence his answers and reflects his normal way of working within the centre.
- A blind candidate asks to use a word processor in his examinations. He also requests the use of a screen reader to allow him to 'read' back and check the answers he has typed. These arrangements are permitted when using a word processor in his examinations. However, if the candidate also wants to use predictive text and/or the spelling and grammar check facility he must meet the published criteria for a scribe, with an approved application in place.

Examples – Word processor and 25% extra time

- A candidate has a below average free writing speed when handwriting and qualifies for 25% extra time. However, using a word processor is her normal way of working within the centre. When typing she can produce her written work effectively. The SENCo awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting. The SENCo will consider whether 25% extra time is required when she writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics and Science examinations. The candidate's cognitive processing will need to be assessed as she will require two below average standardised scores or one below average standardised score and one low average standardised score to be awarded 25% extra time.
- A candidate with significant learning difficulties has a below average speed of writing and below average scores in areas of cognitive processing and reading speed. As using a word processor is his normal way of working within the centre, he has been able to improve his typing speed to match the equivalent average writing rate. However, he has persistent and significant difficulties in interpreting questions and formulating his typed answers. He is given 25% extra time, as well as the use of a word processor, as both arrangements are appropriate to his needs.