



## EXAMINATIONS – LAPTOP AND WORD PROCESSOR POLICY

This policy details the use of word processors and laptops as a normal way of working in the classroom and in examinations and assessments. It is reviewed and updated in line with the release of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations](#).

Any pupil may type in an exam where the subject department has opted in to the exam board's online exam in that subject. This does not grant provision to type in elements other than the online exam and it does not grant permission for pupils to type in any other subjects.

In 2022, the school introduced the use of tablet devices for specific year groups. The school makes a clear distinction between tablet devices (which are used for touch screen/stylus input **only** and are not an access arrangement) and laptops (which are used for typing/word processing and are an access arrangement). A pupil's use of a tablet device does not grant them provision to type as their normal way of working.

The School recognises that for some students with learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions, a laptop may be the most appropriate method of working for some or all written tasks so as not to put that student at a substantial disadvantage.

For students to be allowed to use a laptop:

- A need must be established, either through recommendation in an educational psychology report, medical report or similar, or through referral to and assessment by the school's learning support department. In some cases, need is demonstrated during the admissions process e.g. information from the previous school.

This may include where a candidate has, for example:

- 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
- Typing must be the normal way of working for the student in the subjects in which they wish to type for their exams. The school is required to keep ongoing evidence that this is the case and therefore all students using a laptop in lessons and for exams are required to participate in the learning support monitoring programme.

Laptops used in class need to be provided by students and parents must make sure they are appropriately insured. In exams, laptops will be provided by the school in order to comply with exam procedures.

Where a student has an educational psychology report that has been written since they joined the school, it is important that the assessment is carried out in collaboration with the school.

Where a student is referred to the learning support by a teacher, the referral will need to be accompanied by examples of work that can be kept as part of a file of evidence should a laptop be granted. A member of the department will review the work and decide if a handwriting assessment is appropriate and if so, arrange for this to be carried out. Following the assessment, they will contact parents to advise them of the school's

recommendation. If a laptop is recommended, the student will be responsible for making sure it is suitably charged and looked after in school. They will also need to discuss arrangements for handing in and filing their work with their teachers.

## **Appendix:**

### **Specifics relating to word processor use for examinations and assessments as required by the JCQ**

#### **Principles for using a word processor**

Merchant Taylors' School complies with AA section 4 regulations as follows:

##### (AA 4.2.1)

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

##### (AA 4.2.2)

- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (see Chapter 3). For example, the use of a practical assistant will not normally be allowed when practical skills are being tested.

##### (AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis. (See the second example below.)

##### (AA 4.2.4)

- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE 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, access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Centres must process applications as detailed in Chapter 8, section 8.3 using Access arrangements online where required.
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

##### (AA 4.2.5)

- The arrangement(s) put in place 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’. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.
- SENCos and assessors must refer to AARA Appendices: section 7.6.1 for information on how to confirm ‘normal way of working’.
- †The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment (see AARA Appendices; section 8.3).

### **The use of a word processor**

Merchant Taylors’ School complies with AA section 5 as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.
- For example, the quality of language significantly improves because of 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.)

(AA 5.8.2)

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

(AA 5.8.3)

- It is permissible for a candidate using 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.

(AA 5.8.4)

- For the regulations on the use of word processors in written examinations, please see the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations (commonly known as the JCQ ‘ICE’ booklet):
- <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

### **Exceptions**

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the school provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

### **Word processors and their programmes**

Merchant Taylor’s School complies with ICE instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable

- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used
- an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate
- where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- word processors are 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 separately, a separate invigilator is used
- word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- documents are printed after the examination is over
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- word processed scripts are attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc when using a word processor
- graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a scribe cover sheet attached), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

### **Laptops, Tablets and Word Processors**

Merchant Taylor's School further complies with ICE instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- each page is appropriately numbered.
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- it is possible to set up 'autosave' onto each laptop/tablet
- candidates granted the use of a word processor are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed off is their own.

Head of Learning Support  
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