



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Examinations Manager, Assistant Headteacher Pupil Progress and Assessment.

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed by the Examinations Manager and Senior Leadership Team on 6th March 2025 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Standards Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

Key policy dates:

Ratified by the Full Governing Board: 2nd April 2025

Review frequency: Annual

Next policy review commences: Spring Term 2026

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1. Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops) in examinations and assessments. This policy does not exist in isolation and staff should follow the policy in conjunction with:

- Accessibility Policy
- Examinations Policy

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

References to “AA” relate to JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024 and “ICE” to JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

SENDCo

- Liaises with teaching staff to determine which candidates require word processors for assessments

Examinations Manager

- Liaises with the SENDCo to determine which candidates require devices for assessments
- Liaises with the IT Technicians to ensure the centre has enough appropriate devices

IT Technicians

- Ensures the centre has enough suitable working devices for word processor candidates

3. Principles for using a word processor

St. Gregory’s Catholic High School complies with AA Section B Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows:

3.1 Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so to prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties identified by official access arrangement testing. Candidates can either word process with Microsoft Notepad or Docsplus. Docsplus is an externally purchased software package that can be customised for individual pupils’ access arrangements during examinations, meeting all JCQ regulations.

3.2 The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a pupil with examination access arrangements.

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

3.4 Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis by the SENDCo.

3.5 The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. The majority of candidates requiring the use of a laptop/word processor will have been identified within the school and will have an Individual Education Plan in place. Candidates are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments/controlled assessments/coursework and have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

3.6 The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom; or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal school tests and mock examinations

All other candidates will be reminded that they are responsible for producing legible writing. The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

3.7 The use of a word processor/laptop will not be granted to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

3.8 The principles within this policy apply to internal and external examinations.

4. The use of a word processor (including brailers and tablets)

St. Gregory's Catholic High School complies with AA chapter 5 Access arrangements and adjustments as follows:

4.1 Provides a word processor without spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text.

4.2 Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.

4.3 Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand.

4.4 Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

4.5 Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain answers, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.

4.6 Are also aware that 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.

4.7 Where required, ensures that an awarding board word processor cover sheet is completed and included with each candidate's typed script.

5. Word processors and their programs

St. Gregory's Catholic High School complies with ICE 14.25 Word processors 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 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 inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions
- 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 completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding board'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
- Docsplus can be used as a word processor to allow pupils to practise during lessons and at home due to the purchase of a flexi licence

6. Laptops and tablets

St. Gregory's Catholic High School further complies with ICE 14.20 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 to be seated within the main examination hall/room 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 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
- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals as autosave is not available when using Wordpad
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

7. Responsibilities and tasking

7.1 The Examinations Manager and IT Manager will regularly review the number of available suitable laptops and ensure the optimum number are available for examinations.

7.2 The Examinations Manager will include laptop script requirements as part of the exam briefing given to candidates at the start of all exam seasons.

7.3 The SEND department will provide details to the Examinations Manager of all candidates who need to use laptops in examinations.

7.4 The SEND department will ensure pupils are familiar with the devices and software they will be using in examinations.

7.5 Staff using exam laptops for classroom assessments etc. will ensure their return at the end of each school day.

7.6 The IT manager will ensure laptops and software comply with AA and ICE instructions. This also extends to memory sticks.

7.7 The IT manager will ensure all devices required for examinations are in good working order prior to the beginning of each examination season.

7.8 The Examinations Manager will provide training for invigilators covering their role in upholding this policy

7.9 On exam days the Examinations Manager will:

- Ensure laptops are fully charged ~~and in good working order~~
- Ensure laptops are clear of any previously stored data
- Provide laptop cables in case of laptop battery problems
- Provide cleared memory sticks to the exam invigilators
- When appropriate remind candidates prior to entering the exam hall of laptop script requirements
- Print scripts in a secure environment
- Complete relevant section of word processing cover sheet and ensure sent with script if required

7.10 On exam days the Exam Invigilators will:

- Ensure laptop screens cannot be seen by other candidates
- Remind candidates to save their work regularly
- Provide cleared memory sticks to the candidates to save their work
- Bring memory sticks to the examinations office so scripts are printed off in a secure environment
- Ensure candidate complies with script requirements, once printed, as detailed in this policy
- Ensure candidate verifies the printed script is their own

8. Statement from SENDCo on awarding of laptops

Initial concerns about a pupil's handwriting (legibility and speed) are referred into the Curriculum Support Department. The Specialist Assessor will then collate samples of handwriting from across the Curriculum subjects, get feedback from the pupil's English teacher and evidence of any assessment pieces. Additional information, if required, is sought from Primary transition notes to establish if there is a long-standing need and a learning conversation with the pupil will take place. A DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) is carried out with the pupil and the assessment results are analysed; with percentile scores below the 5th percentile being advised that further intervention i.e. a laptop is considered. A laptop is initially given to the pupil (depending on available resources) for a two week trial and after the trial period feedback is obtained from subject teachers. The Specialist Assessor gives feedback to the pupil's parents/carers and a recommendation of laptop or alternate intervention.

Extenuating circumstances, such as provision of medical evidence, are also possible reasons why a pupil is provided with a laptop where the evidence states the laptop is needed and will benefit the candidate whilst maintaining the integrity of the examination or assessment.