# Use of Word Processors in Examinations Policy

| Approved by: | Board of Directors | May 2023 |
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| Signed by: | Chair of Directors | May 2023 |
| Written by: | Kate Humberstone, Access Arrangements Co-ordinator | May 2023 |

## The Policy Purpose

Fairfield High School is an inclusive school and offers a range of provision to support students with communication and interaction needs; cognition and learning difficulties; social, emotional and mental health needs; or sensory and physical needs. The use of word processors in exams is one of those provisions to support these needs.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that word processors are:

- Used in accordance with JCQ regulations in examinations.
- Used by all students for whom a word processor is a 'Normal Way of Working' for their exams.

## Criteria for the award and allocation of word processors for exams:

JCQ regulations state that the use of a word processor in exams must reflect the student's normal way of working i.e. they regularly use it in lessons.

It is not permissible therefore to grant the use of a word processor to students simply because they would prefer to type rather than write, because they can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a laptop at home.

Examples of the types of students for whom using a word processor could be considered are those with:

- 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.

This list is not exhaustive.

Below are some examples provided by JCQ where award of a word processor to use in exams would be permitted and with what, if any, caveats:

• 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 SENDco
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 uses a word processor in lessons. He requests the use of a word processor in exams. This is granted by the SENDco 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 SENDco allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out by JCQ. She uses the word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled (switched off).

• A candidate taking a GCSE Computer Science paper wishes to use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled. However, the paper is testing his ability to proof read a document. The SENDco refuses the use of the spelling and grammar check facility.

• 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 SENDco. The use of a word processor allows him to correct text, sequence his answers and reflects his normal way of working within the centre.

### Word processor and 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 and at a speed equivalent to an average handwriting rate. She has no further learning difficulties. The SENDco awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting, and only awards 25% extra time when she writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics examinations.

• A candidate with significant learning difficulties has a below average speed of handwriting 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 handwriting 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.

## Word processors and their programmes at Fairfield High School comply with ICE (Instructions for Conducting Examinations 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023) 14.20 to 14.27 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 have used

• an unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate

• candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff, normally the Exams Officer (the EO)

• word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination

• 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

• candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own

• word processed scripts are inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)

• 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 completed scribe cover sheet included), 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

## Practical Considerations

•The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet must be checked before the candidate's examination(s) and the centre must ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination. The use of a fully-charged laptop or tablet will allow centres to seat a candidate within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points. However, where this is not possible eg when there are two consecutive exams, laptops will be supplied with a power cable and candidates seated near to a power outlet.

• The candidates will be seated at the appropriate distances apart as designated in the ICE regulations

• The centre is responsible for ensuring that use of a word processor will not cause distraction for other students and that the screen is not overlooked or can be read by others.

• Candidates will use ExamWritePad software which allows for the insertion of a header and footer.  This software is set up with 12pt font and double spacing.  The header, when populated correctly includes candidate name, centre number, candidate number, exam board, subject title, specification code and component code.  The footer is dated, paginated and has a signature line included.  Students must sign their work after printing it off.  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.

•   Invigilators will remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals.  The ExamWritePad software will auto save.  Candidates must save their work on their laptop and

USB memory stick and must not close the file or switch off the laptop.  The USB stick will be taken to the school office for printing.

 • Candidates will sign their script when it is printed off to verify that the work printed is their own.

• **An awarding body (currently EDUQAS and optional for OCR) may require a   word processor cover sheet to be completed.**

•The electronic copy of a word-processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the file has been kept securely.

## Links to other polices

- SEND Policy

- Exam Policy

- Accessibility and Audit Plan