



Examinations **Word Processor Policy**

Reviewed January 2020

1. **AIMS**

- 1.1 To be a Catholic school where all members of the community live according to Gospel values and the principles and teachings of Mary Ward, promoting the virtues of freedom, sincerity, justice, truth and joy, to allow all members of the community to feel secure and able to work and live in an atmosphere of courtesy and respect.
- 1.2 To create a caring and stable environment, in which each person is respected as an individual with unique gifts, talents and ambitions, and is given the freedom and confidence to develop these.

2. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 The Governors and School appreciate the responsibility of running an exam centre and to this end adopt the policies suggested by JCQ.
- 2.2 The Governors and School recognise their obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). To this end there is an additional GDPR document specifically related to the examinations process.

3. **INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 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*.
- 3.2 References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2016/17* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2016/17*.

4. **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 4.1 This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

5. **PRINCIPLES FOR USING A WORD PROCESSOR**

- 5.1 Loreto College complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties, and

- 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 disabled candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)

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

(AA 4.2.3)

- candidates may not require the same access arrangements 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 on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.4)

access arrangements 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.

(AA 4.2.5)

- normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate;
- candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments;
- 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 (where appropriate); 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 examinations, and
 - mock examinations.

5.2 The only exceptions to the above would be 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.

6. **CENTRE SPECIFIC PROCESSES**

6.1 **The Use of a Word Processor**

6.1.1 Loreto College (St Albans) complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off);
- only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre, and
- 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).

(the above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets).

(AA 5.8.2)

- provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

(AA 5.8.3)

- allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers, and
- 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. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

(AA 5.8.4)

- in all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body), and
- does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

6.2 **Word processors and their programmes**

6.2.1 Loreto College (St Albans) complies with ICE 14 *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 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 inserted/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and in according to the 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, and
- word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

6.3 **Laptops and Tablets**

6.3.1 Loreto College (St Albans) further complies with ICE 14 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;
- where the printer provides the facility to insert a header the EO or SENCo exams coordinator will set this facility up prior to the start of the exam;
- 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;
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet, and
- 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.

6.4 **Accommodating word processors in examinations**

6.4.1 Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- candidates may be seated in the main exam rooms or in a separate room.

6.4.2 Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:

- invigilators are seated where they have a clear view of each candidate's screens.

6.4.3 Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- candidates will be logged onto a secure area of the network with no access to internal or external areas including the internet;
- IT support will check and maintain the secure exam areas to ensure that access to internal and external areas including the internet has been, and
- candidates will be monitored during the exam via senso.

The criteria Loreto College uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations." (AA 5.8)

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

Awarding word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates. Exceptions might 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, and
- ▶ poor handwriting.

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

- ▶ on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment ;
- ▶ where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7 of ICE.

Statement produced by: **Mrs S Ireland SENCo Assistant Headteacher**