USE OF A WORD PROCESSOR IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS AND NON-EXAMINATION ASSSSMENTS POLICY

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Governors Committee accountable for review	Education
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Introduction
- This Policy covers Public Examinations (PEs) and Non-Examination Assessments (NEAs), which are produced under exam or controlled conditions at school.
- The term "word processor" is used here to cover all forms of written communication which are not handwriting – for example, use of a laptop, desktop, tablet or other electronic device.
- For PEs and NEAs the candidate will use a laptop provided by the Examinations Office. Candidates may not use their own laptop.
- The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.
- The purpose of using a word processor is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a candidate, preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for the candidate.
- Although use of a word processor is intended to allow access to assessments, it cannot be granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Candidates may not require a word processor in every specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The SENCo will consider the need for a word processor on a subject-by-subject basis.
- The SENCo will ensure that access to a word processor does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate.
- For a word processor to be allocated, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the word processor – for example, in school examinations, mock exams or timed assessments.
- For public examinations, an application for a word processor must be submitted by the student or their parents to the SENCo no later than the end of October in the academic year in which the exams take place.
- The SENCo will make the final decision on whether to award a candidate the use of a word processor in public examinations and assessments.

Purpose of this policy
- This policy details how the Royal Grammar School High Wycombe complies with JCQ documents Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (Chapter 4 "Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres", section 5.8) and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-23 (sections 14.20-14.27) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of a word processor in examinations and assessments.

Criteria for the use of word processors in public examinations and assessments
- The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams unless there are exceptions.

Exceptions:
- A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in public examinations and assessments where they have a firmly established need, it reflects their normal way of working and when not being awarded a word processor would leave them at a substantial (rather than minor) disadvantage to other candidates as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. For example, a candidate with:
  - ➢ a diagnosed learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
  - ➢ a medical condition
  - ➢ a physical disability, including a temporary injury or impairment that affects them at the time of the public exam or assessment
  - ➢ a sensory impairment
  - ➢ diagnosed difficulties in planning and organisation when writing by hand

In such cases, the School will:
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
- not permit the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- only permit the use of a word processor in public exams and assessments if the candidate has had prior practice of using a School word processor in internal exams and assessments. A candidate's use of their own word processor in internal exams and assessments will not be taken into account when deciding whether to allow them to use a word processor in public exams and assessments
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
- consider whether to allocate a word processor to a candidate at the start of the GCSE or A Level/BTEC course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment
- only permit the use of a word processor after consultation between the candidate, the SENCo, and the candidate's teachers

The School will not:
- grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now prefer to type rather than write in exams, can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a word processor at home
- grant the use of a word processor automatically on the basis of recommendations in privately commissioned reports. The final decision on all cases is made by the School

Please note that allocation of a word processor does not automatically entitle a candidate to 25% extra time and vice-versa.

Examples of need – Word processor
- A candidate who cannot write legibly because they have significant learning difficulties asks to use a word processor in their examinations. It is their **normal means of producing written work within the School** because their teachers cannot

read their writing. They are very proficient in using a word processor. The SENCo allows them to use a word processor in their examinations.

- A candidate who has significant learning difficulties has quite legible writing. However, they make many omissions and cannot order their ideas correctly. Their written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. They request a word processor and this is granted by the SENCo. The use of a word processor allows them to correct text, sequence their answers and reflects their **normal way of working within the School**.

Examples of need – 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 their **normal way of working within the School**. When typing they can produce their written work effectively. The SENCo awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by their slow handwriting. The SENCo will consider whether 25% extra time is required when they write by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics and Science examinations. The candidate's cognitive processing will need to be assessed as they 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 their **normal way of working within the School**, they have been able to improve their typing speed to match the equivalent average writing rate. However, they have **persistent and significant difficulties** in interpreting questions and formulating their typed answers. They are given 25% extra time, as well as the use of a word processor, as both arrangements are appropriate to their needs.

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor
A candidate using a word processor will be accommodated in the main examination hall unless there are specific reasons, either logistical or educational, not to do so. In compliance with the regulations the Exams Officer or a member of the invigilation team will:
- provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check and predictive text disabled by the IT department
- check the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged and/or the word processor is connected to a suitable power source for the duration of the exam.
- remind the candidate to ensure their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01
- ensure the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6
- instruct the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners
- provide a blank memory stick so that the candidate can save their work
- remind the candidate to save their work at regular intervals

In addition, the centre will ensure the word processor:
- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is not connected to the internet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used only as a typewriter
- is cleared of any previously stored data before and after use
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator or spreadsheets
- does not include graphics packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these

At the end of the exam/assessment session:
- the laptop and memory stick will be collected by a nominated person
- the work will be printed from the memory stick. The candidate must be present at the time of printing to verify that the work printed is their own and is complete
- the printed copy of the work will be given to the teacher (if it is a piece of NEA) or sent by the Exams Officer to the exam board (if it is a public exam script)
- the work will then be deleted from the hard drive
- if the memory stick has been used for a public examination, it will be cleared of work
- if the memory stick has been used for a piece of NEA that is being run across more than one session then it will stored securely in the Examinations Office and used again for the next session in that subject. Once the NEA has been completed, the memory stick will be cleared of work

If there is any failure of equipment during or after the examination and a candidate's work is not recoverable (for example, if a word processor crashes or work is lost due to a corrupted memory stick), then the School will contact the exam board for advice.