Oakwood Park Grammar School

Word Processor Policy

Key Staff Responsible for Awarding Word Processors in Examinations

Mrs A Harries	• **SENCo**
• **Dr C Morrison**	• **Examinations Officer**
• **Ms J Bevan**	• **Deputy Headteacher**

This policy is written in accordance with the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments [2025/26]* and *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025/26 [ICE]*.

These guidelines and this policy are updated annually. Their purpose is to outline how decisions are made for awarding our students the use of word processors in their lessons and examinations.

Examination Access Arrangements

The JCQ regulations state:

*A word processor **cannot** simply be granted to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor **must** reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.*
(JCQ, 2025, p70)

OPGS complies with this guidance and as such students in Years 7 -11 are **only** permitted to use a word processor in lessons when it is proven they need additional support. This may be due to:

- 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

Once a valid need has been established, we **must** show that the use of a word processor is the student's 'normal way of working' within the centre over a prolonged period of time, if they are to use it for their GCSEs or A Levels. In addition, they **must** use the word processor for all assessments and mock examinations. This complies with section 5.8 of the JCQ Access Arrangements guidelines [2025/26] below:

5.8.4 The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

(JCQ, 2025, p. 70)

OPGS also complies with ICE guidelines which state that a candidate 's word processor *must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. [ICE 2025/2026, 14.25. P39]*

In addition, we will guide students as follows:

14.22 Candidates must be reminded to ensure that 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

14.23 Each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6.

14.24 In order to make marking easier for examiners, candidates should use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing.

14.25 Must not include AI tools

Subjects
Word processors are not beneficial for examinations in maths and students will need to handwrite these examinations. If appropriate, we may apply for a scribe in some cases. In this eventuality, a further assessment may be necessary to provide further evidence of need.

Word processors may be beneficial in languages but students will need to practice with alternative keyboards in order to achieve most effective use.

A word processor may not be required in all subjects and our SENCo and Examinations Officer will assist with this decision. It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type some of their longer answers and handwrite shorter answers.

Students using word processors at GCSE will not necessarily use them at A Level, dependant on their subject choices.

Accommodation
Word processor users will usually sit their examinations in a room separate to the rest of the cohort. This is to accommodate adequate plug sockets and ensure they have enough space on their desks for both the examination paper and their equipment. A separate invigilator will be provided. They must be seated in such a way that their screens cannot be viewed by other candidates [ICE 14.25 [d] p39]

Submitting work
All examination answers must be printed off either by the candidate or in the presence of the candidate . Candidates must be present to verify that the work is their own. [ICE 14.26 [e] p39]

Moving to OPGS 6th Form from another school
Where a student joins us in the 6th form from another establishment, we will speak to their former school to gather evidence of need and their normal way of working. If this cannot be provided, we will use Year 12 evidence as a basis for a decision.

Exceptions

An exception can be made to normal way of working evidence, where a student sustains an injury leading up to the examination period.

6th Form students are permitted to use their own laptop in all lessons if they wish, but this does not entitle them to use them in their assessments and/or public examinations.

Years 7 -9

Using a word processor in lessons adds an extra layer of organisational difficulty in school as all work must be filed and emailed to staff. Students must also carry it between classrooms and be responsible for it throughout the day, as well as store it safely during break and lunch. Therefore, Year 7 students showing potential need are encouraged to handwrite for as long as possible, whilst they adjust from primary school to OPGS. We will review and consider implementing the laptop support once the student has become more confident in the new school environment.

As word processors are not beneficial for maths, students will need to handwrite in this subject. It is therefore usual practice for students using word processors to participate in our handwriting support interventions alongside the use of the laptop.