

# Word Processing Policy

## 2025/26

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Date	Reviewed by	Summary of changes:
Nov 2022	SLE	Updated
Feb 2024	SLE	Updated which programmes students can use for exams
Feb 2025	SLE	Updated JCQ references
Feb 2026	SLE	Updated JCQ references

### Key staff involved in the policy

SENCo (or equivalent role)	Emma Topley
Exams Officer	Sam Lane
Senior Leader(s)	Beatrice Finn
IT Manager	The Mead IT team

## Introduction

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

(AA 4.2.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

(AA 4.2.1)

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.2)

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. ALS leads/SENcos (or equivalent role) must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.3)

The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCo, or equivalent role must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

(AA 4.2.1)

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

## Purpose of the policy:

This policy details how Orchard Mead Academy complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (14.20-27) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

There are several reasons why a student would be allowed to use a word processor in a public examination. Prior to a decision upon this being made the school would assess the needs of the individual student and discuss them with the SEN department at Orchard Mead Academy.

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre.

They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

**Reasons for the consideration of using a word processor in a public exam may include:**

- The student has a medical condition or physical condition where the use of a word processor makes the examination more accessible and alleviates any potential pain which may occur through writing by hand
- The student has a sensory impairment and use of a word processor makes the examination more accessible
- A student whose handwriting is illegible
- The student has a condition which means that they experience planning or organisational problems when writing by hand and the use of a word processor aids access to the examination paper. The granting of a word processor must always be in line with the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- The use of a laptop is only granted if it reflects the support given to the student as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support: in the class and/or in internal school tests and mock examinations
- The use of a word processor should place the student on a level Platform with other students, neither advantaging nor disadvantaging the student

**The use of a word processor in examinations:**

- During examinations Orchard Mead will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1).
- The use of a word processor in an examination will only be granted if it is their normal way of working within the school.
- The use of a word processor will only be granted to a student if it is appropriate to their needs. (For example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a laptop due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).
- In all cases, the Exams Officer will ensure that a laptop cover sheet (Form 4 – if required by the awarding body) is completed and attached to each candidate's typed script.
- Orchard Mead Academy will not 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 word processor at home (AARA 5.8.4)
- The candidate must be proficient in word processing so it's an appropriate arrangement.
- Work must be completed in a minimum of 12pt font, double spacing. All pages must have the centre number, candidate name, candidate number, unit/component code along with a page number.
- The laptop provided must not have any predicted software etc., (ICE 14.25)

**The word processor/laptops used for exams are:**

- Used purely for exams and always kept in the Exams secure store. They can only be accessed by the Exams Officer.
- Have been cleared of any previously stored data. Are in good working order at the time of the examination.
- Are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Have had the spell check facility disabled

- The exams officer ensures that students are accommodated in such a way that other students are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.
- All work produced by a student on the laptop during an exam or assessment will be on a programme that provides adequate levels of security in line with JCQ guidance.
- Documents are printed after the examination is over by the Exams Officer. The students are present to verify that the work printed is their own.

### **Notifying students and staff**

Students granted a word processor for exams will also be allocated a word processor for use in their lessons by the IT department.

- The SEND faculty advises staff which students are permitted the use of a word processor for exams.

### **The criteria Orchard Mead Academy uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations:**

Orchard Mead Academy's statement to meet the requirement, as outlined in the JCQ Access Arrangements guidance

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the Head of Centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. Exceptions to this are where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a word processor. The process by which access to a word processor will be awarded is as follows:

- Teaching staff at Orchard Mead Academy identify students who use a word processor as their normal way of working during the first term of the academic year and inform the exams officer and ALS/SENCo
- At the end of each academic year student needs are assessed and evaluated and if a student's needs have changed these will be identified and the need met with the provision of a word processor
- Word processors provided for exams are used only for exams and have blank memories prior to the examination

### **Granting a word processor**

Word processors are granted for exams where the candidate has a firmly established need, and it reflects the candidate's normal way of working plus if not granted the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage.

Established need includes 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
- illegible handwriting

### **Allocating word processors**

Exam-compliant word processors are allocated by the Exams Officer on the day of the exam. Each student will have their own laptop and will use that laptop for the duration of the mock/exam season.

The centre will not:

Simply grant the use of a word processor 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. (AA 5.8.4)