Examinations: Word Processor Policy

Contents

Exams: Word Processor Policy

This policy applies to:

Francis Holland Regents Park   Francis Holland Sloane Square   Francis Holland Prep

Where there are differences between the schools these have been clearly highlighted.

Related Policies:

Other Examination policies

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for examinations

Role	Named people: Regent's Park	Named people: Sloane Square
Head of Learning Strategies (JHLS/SENDCo)	Margot Wynne	Victoria Marshall and Catrin Brauner (Joint)
Assistant Head Assessment and Data		Tristan Marshall
Examinations officer	Suraya Kazi	Rowan Dinwoodie
SLT member(s)	Amelia Slocombe (Senior Deputy Head)	Max Devenport (Deputy Head Academic)
IT Manager	Ravi Singdia	Kuldev Sagoo
Director of Technology	Matt Britland	Matt Britland

Introduction

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.

References to 'AARA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (Updated Annually)* and 'ICE' to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations (Updated Annually)*.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Francis Holland Schools comply with the current ARAA and ICE when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of a word processor in her examinations. The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The use of a word processor

▶ The use of a word processor in examinations and assessments is an available access arrangement.
▶ Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers due to learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which place them at a substantial disadvantage., This includes candidates using a word processor on a temporary basis because of an injury.
▶ The JHLS/SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate.
▶ 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
▶ The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
▶ Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the JHLS/SENDCo must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.
▶ The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.
▶ The needs of the candidate will be considered at the start of a candidate's course and based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/examinations and mock examinations, etc. Confirmed arrangements will be in place before a candidate takes an examination or assessment.

Provision of word processors in examinations

In compliance with the regulations, Francis Holland Schools:

▶ Provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. The word processor will be installed on a computer which is supplied with internet access denied, meaning that the "word definition" lookup, if a component of the word processor, will also be denied.
▶ Only grant the use of a word processor or tablet to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the school.
▶ Only grant the use of a word processor or tablet to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs.
▶ Provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components, as standard practice, unless prohibited by the specification.
▶ Allow candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.
▶ Where required by the exam board, ensure that a word processor cover sheet is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body).

▶ Do not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because she uses a laptop at home (see Appendix 2 for details of criteria).

Supply of laptops

▶ Francis Holland School supplies all word processors used in examinations
▶ The Learning Strategies Department (Sloane Square) or the Learning Enhancement Department (Regent's Park) is responsible for notifying the IT department and EO/DEO of the number of laptops required for public examinations in a timely manner

Locations of laptops

▶ At Sloane Square, candidates using word processors are normally accommodated in the main examination room unless separate invigilation is required for the candidate (e.g. they have a reader or scribe) or for the paper they are taking (e.g. a listening examination). At Regent's Park, most word processor users will be in a smaller room for their public examinations. We may allocate a word processing candidate to the main examination room, if they do not require any other access arrangements.
▶ Word processors will be placed in locations which allow invigilators, but not other candidates, to view the screen during the examination so that they can verify that candidates are using the word processor in accordance with examination regulations.

Configuration of laptops

▶ When a word processor is first installed in the examination room, the IT manager or IT technician and the examinations officer must both verify that it has been correctly configured:
  o The laptop is connected to the mains or has sufficient battery capacity to function for a whole examination day. For all Cambridge examinations, laptops must be connected to a power source.
  o The latest version of ExamWritePad software is installed on each device
  o Autosave is turned on. (Auto-backup is also turned on).
  o Spelling and grammar check facility and predictive text is disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise.
  o Voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
  o The word processor is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
  o Candidates do not have access to other software, including calculator, graphing or spreadsheet software in examinations where a calculator is not permitted.
▶ Prior to each subsequent examination, the word processor must be checked by the IT manager or IT technician to ensure that it is in full working order, does not contain any previously stored data, and, that the correct template is set up. If not connected to the mains, the battery charge must also be checked.
▶ If candidates are provided with a memory stick, it will have been cleared of any previously stored data, by the IT manager or IT technician.

- ▶ Records must be kept to indicate that laptops have been correctly configured initially and checked before each session.

Use of laptops during the examination

- ▶ The word processor is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions.
- ▶ At the start of the examination, candidates using word processors will be reminded to enter their name, candidate number and component code, in addition to writing their details on the answer booklet. Candidates will enter this information onto the software welcome screen which will automatically populate the header and footer.
- ▶ Word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

Printing of scripts

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- ▶ The relevant printer should be checked at the start of the examination day for sufficient toner supply, paper supply, and tested for any issues, such as paper jams.
- ▶ The candidate will print the script and (if relevant) the cover sheet from their device.
- ▶ An invigilator or the examinations officer will accompany the candidate to the Exams Office to collect the printout and verify that the work is their own and that all pages have printed correctly.
- ▶ Sufficient invigilation staff are timetabled such that when candidates need to be accompanied to the Exams Office to print their scripts, there remains the required ratio of invigilators to candidates in the examination room.

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- An invigilator will check that each candidate using a word processor has saved her finished script.
- A member of the IT Department will know when the word processors have finished their examination and either they or the runner outside of the examination room will collect the script. The candidate must remain in the examination room.
- The relevant printer should be checked at the start of the examination day for sufficient toner supply, paper supply, and tested for any issues, such as paper jams, and connected to the network.
- Candidates must be present when their script is printed so they can verify that the work is their own and that all pages have printed correctly
- Candidates will sign the bottom of each page of their script to verify that it is their work.

Portable storage medium

The Centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used:
- is provided by the Centre

- is cleared of any previously stored data

Review

Policy author/s	RP: Senior Deputy Head SSq: Deputy Head Academic
This review	Spring 2026
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Next review	Spring 2027

Appendix 1: The criteria Francis Holland Schools use 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." [AARA]

Laptops and other portable device are increasingly used by all pupils in the classroom at Francis Holland School. However, it remains the case that the normal way of working for tests and examinations at Francis Holland is that pupils handwrite their answers.

Awarding word processors

Pupils are only permitted to use laptops for tests and examinations, following formal assessment by the JHLS/SENDCo, if it is found that pupil would be substantially disadvantaged by a specific learning difficulty, physical difficulty or medical condition and that a laptop would alleviate this disadvantage.

A candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in examinations where 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.

Needs 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.

If a difficulty has already been used to confer eligibility for 25% extra time, this will not be used to confer eligibility for use of a word processor. In this case a pupil will often use a mixed approach; extra time in some subjects and a word processor in others.

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 school provides word processors to all candidates.

Allocating word processors

Appropriate examination-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCo and the examinations 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 examination session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the examination earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the examination will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with the current ICE.

Statement produced for Francis Holland School, Sloane Square by: **Rob Cawley, Senior Deputy Head, Academic**   Statement date: 01/05/2024. Statement reviewed by Rob Cawley, Senior Deputy Head Academic 24/01/2025 Statement reviewed by Max Devenport, (Deputy Head Academic) Autumn 2025

Statement Produced for Francis Holland School, Regent's Park by: **Jacqueline Zugg, Deputy Head Academic (Until August 2024)**   Statement date: 01/05/2024. Statement reviewed by Philip Purvis (Deputy Head, Academic) 24/01/2025 and Autumn 2025

Appendix 2: School Policy for Laptop Use in Schools

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils' individual educational and support needs are met and that all pupils are able to achieve to their maximum potential. In some instances, pupils can benefit greatly from the usage of a laptop within lessons. As a school we want to ensure in these cases that guidelines are in place for pupils, parents and staff to work together in a manner that most benefits the pupil.

Pupils may use laptops in lessons at Francis Holland School in two contexts:

1.   In Year 7 and above when the pupil has been identified as having a specific physical, medical or learning need and requires the use of a laptop to mitigate the disadvantage they would have when handwriting compared with other pupils. These pupils will be permitted to use a laptop in internal and external examinations. They will be assisted in their use of a laptop by the JHLS/SENDCo.

2.   In Year 7 and above laptops or other devices may be used in lessons at the discretion of the teachers. However, pupils falling into this category must also be encouraged by their teachers to practise hand-writing as they will not be permitted to use a laptop in internal and external examinations.

Guidance for pupils who will use laptops in lessons and examinations.

A pupil meets one of the following conditions per JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) recommendations:

> 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

This needs to be evidenced by an appropriate medical letter or assessment report acceptable to the examination boards, supported by a picture of need in the school.

- The pupil must attain a competent level of touch-typing. 30 words a minute is an approximate target but may vary according to each individual.

- When an appropriate touch-typing speed has been reached, the JHLS/SENDCo will do a brief assessment and start arrangements for using a laptop in school.

- The JHLS/SENDCo will give guidance on organisation, filing and handing in prep.

- The JHLS/SENDCo will monitor the use of the laptop and will notify all relevant subject teachers if a pupil has been granted use of the word processor for specific subject notetaking, prep, tests and examinations.

- If a pupil is typing the majority of her class notes and prep, she may move onto a relevant organisational system.

- The school will not supply a laptop or printer except where additional support would be offered to bursary pupils.

- The laptop to be used must meet the following requirements:
  > A full-sized keyboard layout
  > Minimum 10-inch screen size

   Microsoft Office compatible software

   An up-to-date anti-virus software

- All standard work must be saved in a Microsoft Office compatible format, and a printer must be available at home for producing prep and copies of classwork.

- The acceptable use agreement for devices must be signed and returned to school.

A laptop will be most useful with extended writing tasks or lengthy note taking exercises. There may be some lessons where the use of a laptop will not be of benefit and the pupil should continue to practise and use handwriting (for example, in Mathematics, Music and the sciences).

Where permission to use a laptop has been granted, we expect:

- Pupils to follow and adhere to teacher instructions on whether or not to use a laptop in specific lessons.

- All work is saved regularly.

- All prep to be printed at home and, where appropriate stuck into the relevant exercise book or filed in the pupil's subject folder.

- Prep to be submitted electronically only when instructed.

To ensure that the laptop can be used effectively, the school will:

- Ensure that the laptop can be physically accommodated within classrooms.

- Take responsibility for guiding the pupil and preparing appropriate resources.

- Make reasonable adjustments but will not do so in a manner that disadvantages other pupils.

Where a laptop is the normal method of working within the classroom and for prep, because of one of the accepted reasons above, pupils will be able to request laptop usage within examinations. Where granted, the following conditions apply:

- Only school exam laptops can be used, where assisting tools such as spell checker will not be available.

- Laptop users must be seated with screens visible to invigilators.

- Where applicable, work will be printed out on school printers at the end of the exam.

- The JHLS/SENDCo will be responsible for granting permission for laptop usage within examinations and will liaise with examinations and IT teams, providing the final list of permitted users.

Guidance for pupils who use laptops in lessons but not in examinations

With the growing use of technology within the curriculum, the following guidance will be regularly communicated to teaching staff to ensure that girls are adequately prepared to handwrite examinations:

In line with JCQ regulations and the school's laptop policy all girls at Francis Holland handwrite their examinations in GCSE and GCE examinations. Although we would not in any way like to direct how a department delivers the curriculum, the JHLS/SENDCo would urge all staff to ensure that their students' handwriting quality and speed is of a high standard and can be maintained for the duration of an examination. Planning, writing and editing an essay by hand are also very different compared to using a computer. Therefore, girls need to be handwriting regularly to maintain and develop these skills.

The exception to this is where a girl is specifically identified as being at a disadvantage when handwriting and is therefore using a word processor. This will be due to an identified difficulty such as a learning need which directly affects speed of working, or a physical difficulty which affects handwriting. It is not sufficient for a pupil to be granted the use of a word processor solely on the basis that their typing speed is greater than their writing speed, as this gives the candidate an advantage over other candidates. All girls who are eligible to use a laptop will be on the Learning Strategies/Enhancement lists at the beginning of their respective courses i.e. Year 10 and Year 12. There will, of course, be other girls who are identified as being in need later.

Please do ensure that if a girl is using a laptop, she is doing so with spell check and grammar check turned off. This will be the case during an examination and so girls must maintain and develop their spelling, grammar and editing skills.