

Date due for ratification
at Full Governors'
Meeting
12 March 2026



Review
Teaching, Learning
& Standards
Committee
Autumn 2026

Word Processor Policy - Exams 2025-2026

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL

**Part of St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Company No: 7913261
Registered Office: Surrey Street, Norwich NR1 3PB**

THE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

*I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full
(John 10:10)*

We are a joyous and inclusive Catholic school, inspired by the love of God and the teachings of Jesus,
specifically faith, hope, forgiveness and peace.

Our community is committed to a rounded education that develops knowledgeable, morally informed
and compassionate young leaders.



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language
please contact the Clerk to the Governors on 01603 611431 and we will do our best to help.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams.

References in this policy to AARA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026](#) publications.

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 4.2.2)

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 4.2.3)

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. SENCos (or equivalent role) **must** consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)

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

(AA 4.2.7)

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 Notre Dame High School (NDHS) complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates - 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 criteria NDHS uses to award and allocate word processors for 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 examinations where:

- the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology
- the candidate 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

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate where appropriate to their needs

A laptop provision will not automatically be granted because the student wishes to use one or because they can work faster or uses one at home. The following candidates would adhere to the benefits of using a laptop:

- A candidate who has a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly. At Notre Dame this would be through staff feed-back, handwriting or specific equipment intervention, or a case where the illegibility of a student impedes the reader to decipher what they have written.
- A candidate who has a medical condition - we have students with a wide range of conditions which impact on their legibility and speed of handwriting. All medical evidence is provided on file.
- A candidate with a physical disability - hands cannot grip / manage a writing implement without discomfort or impacts legibility to the point that it cannot be deciphered. All physical needs are provided by evidence on file. *This also includes a temporary provision for a student who has suffered an injury or accident and requires one for short-term use. AA 5.8.4*
- A candidate with a sensory impairment - we work with VSSS and east Coast Speech and Language who complete regular in school assessments and provide us with up to date reports and recommendations on the best ways to support our visual and hearing-impaired students.
- A candidate who experiences planning or organisational problems when writing by hand.
- A candidate with consistently poor handwriting that has not responded to intervention or alternative equipment e.g. an ergonomic pen, handwriting practise, pen grip etc.
- A candidate who has an ATT (Access Through Technology) application which has to have an NHS referral from a professional such as an occupational therapist or ADHD nurse etc. to support the fact that the pupil would be at a disadvantage.
- A candidate with Social, Emotional and / or Mental Health issues which impact on thought process, anxiety or focus during examinations and day-to-day lessons. Specialist evidence provided on file.

'It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.' 5.8.3 JCQ 2024-25

At NDHS, we would never wish to disadvantage any student, so all care is taken to liaise between teaching staff, the exams office and the SENDCo to ensure that pupils, parents and all concerned understand the criteria we use to ascertain laptop usage in examinations. We will:

- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the **start** of the 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a room appropriate to their needs.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check and predictive text switched off to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- uses examwritepad software so that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22), that each page of the typed script is numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23) and that 12pt font and double spacing are used to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)
- instructs an IT technician to set up 'autosave' on each exam account to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

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 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 as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites or spreadsheets
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)
- does not include AI tools
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)

Portable storage medium

(ICE 14.25)

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

Printing the script after the exam has ended

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure:

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is their own
- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they are instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22)

The centre will also ensure that where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate's typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body's instructions). (ICE 14.26)

The centre may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body. (ICE 14.27)

Allocating word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the exams officer.