St George's School

	Guidance for use of Word Processors in school and in examinations.
	Co-ordinator : SENDCo & Exams Officer
	Reviewed : Autumn 2025

St George's School values good handwriting and expects that most students will handwrite in lessons and exams.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a student purely because they prefer to type, can work faster or because they use a word processor at home.

However, there are exceptional circumstances, as identified by the school, where students may need to use a word processor. Referrals for assessment for use of a word processor must be made to the Assessments Officer/SENCo by subject teachers detailing evidence of need.

In addition, the use of a word processor **must** reflect the student's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the student's needs. This therefore requires that an agreement for the use of a laptop be agreed and trialed well in advance of any public exams.

The list below helps to identify students who may need to use a word processor in lessons and exams:

- A specific learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly
- A medical condition/physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Very poor handwriting to such a degree that writing is virtually illegible
- Planning and organisational difficulties when writing by hand.

Procedure
- The Assessments Officer in agreement with the SENCo will complete an assessment of the student's handwriting legibility and speed and their typing speed.
- Following an assessment, if the student qualifies for the use of a word processor (in agreement with the SENCo), the arrangement will be added to the student's details on SIMS, Edulink and to the Exam Access Arrangement/Reasonable Adjustments list.

Use in Class
- Only students who have been assessed and qualify for word processor use may do so in lessons.
- In some lessons, a word processor may not generally be needed or may not be appropriate, e.g. Maths, Languages.
- Due to the increased organisational demands in using a word processor (i.e., printing out work and sticking into book etc.), approval is generally only given to pupils in Year 9 upwards. Pupils in Year 7 or 8 would only be considered for use of a word processor in lessons in very

exceptional circumstances or if it is cited as their normal way of working on coming into the school

- Students are informed once they qualify that they need to either:
  - borrow a lap-top from the Learning Support Department
  - bring in their own lap-top
  - students are responsible for the safekeeping of these laptops and must follow ICT user agreement.
- A review of provision will be undertaken on a regular basis to determine if the use of IT remains effective for the student's needs.

Use in Examinations

- If a student is entitled to a word processor for exams, they will use ExamWritePad software. The spellcheck function will not be enabled unless previously agreed as per instructions from the Assessments Officer/SENCO. If a student is entitled to the use of a scribe and uses a word processor instead in an exam, spellcheck will be enabled.
- Most students will complete their exams on desktop computers in a computer room. Work will be saved onto a secure area of the school network; students will be provided with specific login details for this purpose.
- During an exam students may use their hard copy answer book in addition to, or instead of, the word processor if they wish to do so e.g. for maths papers where large amounts of writing are not required.
- At the end of every exam, students work will be printed, students **must** check the printout of their work and sign each page, **before** leaving the exam room.
- If a student sits their exams in a smaller room, this will be because they have another access arrangement e.g., they are entitled to a reader. The student will use the computer provided, save their work to a memory stick, the invigilator will then escort the student to the Exams Office with the memory stick to print their work. As stated above, the student must check and sign the printout of their work before leaving the Exams Office.
- In all cases, the student will be provided with detailed instructions on using the software before their exams commence. A copy of the guidance will be available in the room where the student is sitting their exam.

- A student will not necessarily need to use a word processor for all exams and at times for only certain subjects, which will be specified to the Exams Office in a student's access arrangement details. However, the provision must be agreed with the SENCo and Exams Officer prior to the examination period.
- Students permitted to use word processors in public exams (GCSEs, iGCSEs and GCEs) must have been using a word processor as their normal way of working for lessons, homework and internal tests, for a prolonged period of time.
- A student may be permitted to use a word processor on a temporary basis because of a temporary injury at the time of an exam.

It is important to remember that while the school will make every effort to ensure that things go smoothly, the hardware or software involved can malfunction, and unfortunately, in this circumstance the school cannot take any responsibility for the consequences.

If a student work fails to save and/or print in a school exam, they will be given an opportunity to resit the paper at another time, at the discretion of the department concerned.

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In a public exam the school would make an application for special consideration to the relevant exam board. The exam board would calculate an estimated mark for the paper concerned, which could be lower or higher than, or the same as, the mark the student would actually have achieved had the work not been lost.

It is important to understand that by using a word processor in an exam the student is automatically accepting these conditions.

Further Questions

- Questions relating to entitlement to a word processor in exams should be directed to the Assessments Officer/SENCo:

  Mrs Fitzgerald - afitzgerald@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

  Miss Linsell - tlinsell@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

- Questions relating to use of a word processor in exams should be directed to the Exams Officer.

  - Mrs Monson - examsoffice@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk