

# Blackfen School for Girls



## Examinations Policy

### Use of a word processor in examinations and assessments

Headteacher: Ms C Senior

Chair of Governors: Mr W Stone

	Date	Name	Signature
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Lead Person	DHT, Curriculum	Fiona Minnis	
Prepared by	DHT, Curriculum	Fiona Minnis	
Verified by	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
Approved by	Chair of Governors	William Stone	

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## 1. Introduction and purpose

This policy outlines Blackfen School for Girls' approach to the use of word processors in examinations and assessments. It ensures compliance with JCQ regulations whilst supporting students who have a genuine need to use this access arrangement. This statement reflects the school policy of Blackfen School for Girls to establish and maintain compliance with the UK Equality Act (2010). It ensures that the operation of the Examinations Office also maintains compliance with the UK Equality Act (2010) in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion; with regard to legislation, regulatory requirements and best practice.

Policy Scope: This policy applies to all internal and external examinations and assessments where word processors may be used as an access arrangement.

## 2. Regulatory framework

This policy is based on the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publication 'Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments 2025-2026' which states that access arrangements must reflect the student's 'normal way of working', must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis, must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage the student and must be agreed before the assessment.

## 3. General principles

All examination arrangements at Blackfen School, including the use of a word processor, comply with JCQ 'Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures' to ensure the integrity of examinations is maintained.

### 3.1 Normal way of working

The use of a word processor must reflect the student's normal way of working in the classroom, in completion homework and in internal assessments (except in the case of temporary injury/impairment) which is defined as 'support':

- In the classroom
- Working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- Literacy support lessons
- Literacy intervention strategies
- In internal school tests and mock examinations

The only exception to this list is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

This means that a word processor is usually offered to candidates under the following circumstances (although this list is not exhaustive):

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisation problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting

### 3.2 Equality of access

Word processors are provided to ensure students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills without being disadvantaged by their specific needs, whilst maintaining the integrity of the assessment.

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## 4. Eligibility criteria

### 4.1 Who may use a word processor

Students who may need to use a word processor include those with:

- Cognition and learning needs, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia
- Communication and interaction needs
- Sensory and physical needs, such as a physical disability
- Social, emotional and mental health needs

Specific examples include students who:

- Have a learning difficulty affecting writing speed or legibility
- Have a physical disability or medical condition affecting handwriting
- Have a sensory impairment
- Use a word processor as their normal way of working in lessons

### 4.2 Temporary arrangements

Students with temporary injuries (e.g., broken arm) may be granted permission to use a word processor even if this is not their normal way of working.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 The SENCO

The SENCO must:

- Lead on the access arrangements process
- Work with teachers, support staff and exams office personnel to put approved access arrangements in place
- Work with the centre's appointed assessor to ensure a consistent, joined-up process
- Ensure evidence of need is maintained

#### Specific responsibilities of the SENCO include:

- Identifying students who require word processors
- Maintaining records of normal way of working
- Processing applications to exam boards
- Liaising with the Examinations Officers

### 5.2 Teaching staff

Teachers must:

- Identify students who may benefit from using a word processor
- Report concerns to the SENCO
- Ensure students use word processors regularly in lessons where this is their normal way of working
- Provide evidence of normal way of working when requested

### 5.3 Examinations Officers

The Examinations Officers must:

- Coordinate the provision of word processors for examinations
- Ensure technical setup complies with JCQ requirements
- Brief invigilators on supervising students using word processors
- Maintain records of word processor use in examinations

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In particular, the Examinations Officers should verify during the assessment or examination that the word processor:

- Must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused.
- Must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- Must not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- Must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these.
- Must not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.
- Must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
- Must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

After the assessment or examination in which a word processor has been used, the Examinations Officers must take the following actions:

- A word processor cover sheet (Form 4) must be printed from the JCQ website and included with the candidate's typed script.

## 5.4 IT support department

Working with the Examinations Officers, the school's IT support team must:

- Ensure word processors are set up correctly according to JCQ requirements
- Remove access to prohibited software and functions
- Test equipment before examinations
- Provide technical support during examinations if required

## 5.5 LT line manager – Examinations team

- Ensure that the Examinations Officers apply the Word Processing policy in line with JCQ and school expectations, communicating with the SENCO and designated staff, as well as with Faculty and Subject Leaders and with examination boards, as required, in a timely manner.

## 6. Application process and timelines

### 6.1 Deadlines

Applications must be submitted by:

- 31 January for modified papers (if required)
- 21 March for all other access arrangements for summer examinations

### 6.2 Application steps

1. **Identification** (ongoing): Teachers identify students who may need word processors
2. **Assessment** (by October, Year 10): SENCO assesses need and gathers evidence
3. **Application** (by deadlines above): SENCO submits applications to exam boards

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4. **Approval** (exam board timeline): Await confirmation from exam boards
5. **Implementation** (from approval): Begin using word processors as normal way of working

## 7. Technical requirements

### 7.1 Equipment setup

The school's IT support team should make the following checks prior to the assessment or examination in which a word processor is to be used:

1. The word processor can be used only as a type-writer, not as a database and contains only standard formatting software.
2. The following actions have been taken to prepare the word processor for use in assessments or examinations:
  - a) The word processor has been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used.
  - b) Where required, a memory stick is provided to the candidate, which is cleared of any previously stored data. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate.
  - c) The word processor is in good working order at the time of the examination.
  - d) The word processor is accommodated in the examination room in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator is provided.
  - e) The word processor must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.

All word processors used in examinations must:

- Have spell-check and grammar-check functions disabled
- Have predictive text functions disabled
- Have speech recognition software disabled (unless separately approved)
- Have access to the internet disabled
- Have access to previously stored documents removed
- Be in a format that allows work to be printed after the examination

### 7.2 Acceptable software

The following software may be used:

- Microsoft Word (with appropriate settings)
- Google Docs (offline mode, with appropriate settings)
- Other word processing software approved by the SENCO and Examinations Officer

### 7.3 File management

- Each pupil must save their work in a clearly labelled file
- Files must be named with: Candidate number, subject, paper number, and date
- Work must be printed immediately after the examination
- A backup copy should be saved securely

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## 8. Examination arrangements

Examination procedures follow the JCQ 'Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026 and in particular, the guidance on access arrangements as set out in Chapter 14.

### 8.1 Room allocation

Students using word processors will normally:

- Be seated appropriately so as to avoid disturbing other candidates
- Be supervised by a trained invigilator
- Have their equipment checked before the examination begins

### 8.2 Invigilation requirements

Invigilators must:

- Check that word processors are set up correctly
- Ensure students cannot access prohibited functions
- Monitor students throughout the examination
- Ensure work is saved and printed correctly
- Complete the required documentation

### 8.3 Printing arrangements

- Work must be printed immediately after the examination under supervision
- Printed work must be attached to any required cover sheets
- The candidate must sign the printed work
- A backup electronic copy must be retained until results are issued

## 9. Evidence and record keeping

### 9.1 Evidence of 'Normal way of working'

The SENCO will maintain evidence including:

- Records of word processor use in lessons
- Examples of classwork and homework completed on word processor
- Teacher observations
- Assessment reports (where applicable)

### 9.2 Records to be kept

Records will include:

- List of students approved to use word processors
- Subjects and papers for which approval granted
- Evidence of normal way of working
- Exam board approval documentation
- Technical setup checklists
- Invigilation records

### 9.3 Retention period

Records will be retained until the deadline for enquiries about results has passed, or until any appeal, malpractice or maladministration investigation has been completed.

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## 10. Monitoring and evaluation

### 10.1 Regular review

The SENCO will:

- Monitor the use of word processors in lessons
- Review whether arrangements are meeting students' needs
- Gather feedback from students and staff
- Report to the Leadership Team, as required

### 10.2 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SENCO and Examinations Officer, in consultation with the Leadership Team, to ensure:

- Compliance with current JCQ regulations
- Effectiveness in meeting students' needs
- Technical arrangements remain appropriate

## 11. Equality and accessibility

Access arrangements must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage the pupil – they should meet the student's needs without affecting the integrity of the assessment. The school is committed to:

- Making reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010
- Ensuring all students can access assessments appropriately
- Removing barriers to achievement for students with SEND

## 12. Contingency planning

### 12.1 Technical failure

In the event of technical failure:

- Students will be provided with alternative equipment immediately
- If this is not possible, students will complete the examination by hand
- The incident will be reported to the exam board
- Special consideration may be requested if appropriate

### 12.2 Emergency arrangements

The Examinations Officer maintains a contingency plan including:

- Spare word processors
- Alternative room arrangements
- Emergency IT support contacts

## 13. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Examinations Policy: Malpractice (2025-2026)
- SEND Policy
- Equalities Duty for Schools
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Data Retention (GDPR) Policy