USING LAPTOPS/WORD PROCESSORS/TABLETS IN EXAMINATIONS POLICY

Reviewed: September 2024
Next Review: September 2025

This document will remain valid until the end of the academic year 2024-2025

In accordance with the JCQ's regulations on the use of word processors in written examination, *JCQ's Instructions for conducting examinations*, Palmers Green High School will provide a laptop/word processor/tablet with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is seen as their normal way of working within the school and is appropriate to their needs.

School Criteria for use of a word processor in examinations
Candidates who would benefit from the use of a laptop/word processor/tablet, for example, where quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand, may also be eligible to use one in examinations. The laptop/word processor/tablet cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard (unless her handwriting speed is in the low average or below average band), or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a laptop/word processor/tablet must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the school and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

At PGHS, pupils who have:
- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a standard score of 89 or below on a JCQ recognised test of writing speed (where that score is not being used as core evidence for 25% extra time)
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand or
- poor handwriting
- a temporary injury which prohibits them from writing by hand

and for whom it is their usual way of working in the classroom, may benefit from using a laptop/word processor/tablet in their examinations (this list is not exhaustive). All such decisions will be made by the Head of Learning Support, after discussions with subject teachers and the Senior Management Team.

JCQ Rules and School Procedures

There is no requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements online or to record the use of the arrangement, although good practice is to record it in both the pupil's Individual Action Plan and in the optional section of Part 3 of Form 8 (where an application is being made for other non- centre delegated access arrangements). No evidence is needed to support the arrangement other than an annually updated version of this policy, which must be available at all times for JCQ Inspection.

It is acceptable for pupils using a word processor in an examination to type certain answers, i.e., those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. This is something which will be discussed with each pupil by the Head of Learning Support during the course of each academic year. Given the limitations of exam appropriate word processor programmes, it is likely to be extremely laborious, if not impossible, for a candidate to word process their answers for a GCSE Maths paper, and this will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances.

The use of word processors in controlled assessment or coursework components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

Only specified examination devices belonging to, managed by and kept at the school may be used in public examinations. Pupils will be issued with an individual exam area log-in by the Head of Learning Support, which will take them to a secure Examinations Area with no access to the internet, school intranet or any applications other than Wordpad.

The device must have the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled (unless their use is a part of formal access arrangements for the pupil which have been applied for and approved by the JCQ).

It needs to be used as a word processor, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable.

The devise must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium also in use. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a pupil. When needed, the school will provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, for use in the examination.

In all tests and examinations, the device must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator, spreadsheets etc.; and it must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software. The only exceptions to this are in the case of a pupil who has also been granted the use of either a computer reader or speech to text software, as this software will also be installed on the same device in the secure Examinations Area.

The battery capacity of the device **must** be checked before the candidate's examination(s). The school will ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination, and that the device is generally in good working order.

The pupil must provide the Exams Officer or members of SMT with information about which examination papers they would like to take using a laptop/word processor/tablet, in advance of the examination period, when timetables and subjects have been verified.

Examination Procedures
Whenever a laptop/word processor/tablet is to be used in an examination, the candidate will need to be present **at least 10 minutes** before the examination is due to begin; this will ensure that the candidate will have time to 'boot up' and is fully prepared. No technical assistance can be provided during the course of the examination. **It is imperative that the candidate regularly backs up work on the hard drive.** Candidates **must** be reminded to ensure that their **Centre number, candidate number** and the **unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer**: e.g., 12345/8001 – 6391/01. Alternatively, an IT technician can set up 'autosave' on each word processor/laptop/tablet. In this way, if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost.

Pupils should use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking. The pupil **MUST** complete the front of the Answer book even though an electronic device is being used.

At the end of the examination, the pupil will be given a cleared memory stick to save their work on, and then will be escorted to a printer where the work will be printed off. The pupil **must** be present when the script is printing off so as to verify that the work is their own and, will need to sign each page to verify that it is their original work. In such circumstances, the pupil **must** be supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way. Each page **must** be appropriately numbered.

In a change to previous regulations, the school may now retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts, which can then be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. Any copies of word-processed scripts kept for this purpose will be securely locked in the Headteacher's office, and written confirmation from the headteacher sent to the Awarding Body.

The Exams Officer will complete the Awarding Body's word processor coversheet (if one is required) and securely attach it to the front of the pupil's typed script. The script must be sent to the awarding body in the normal way, along with all of the other scripts for that component.