



# Exams Word Processor Policy

**School Name:** Birch Wood School

**Policy owner:** Philip Leaney

**Ratified by Governors:** 2021

**Reviewed:** September 2025

## Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessment is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of the updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' (AA) and 'Instructions for conducting Examinations' (ICE).

**There is no requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online (AAO) or to record the use of the arrangement.** No evidence is needed to support the arrangement.

## Principles for using a word processor

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. Students at Birch Wood School have access to the use of a word processor when it is demonstrated that the quality of their language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. This is the student's normal way of working at Birch Wood School and they may be granted the use of a word processor within the school where there is a significant amount of writing. Students at Birch Wood School are identified as having significant improvement in the quality of their language due to, 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
- Planning and organisational difficulties when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting
- Slow handwriting that qualifies for extra time where the use of a word processor is their normal way of working within Birch Wood School and removes the barrier requirement for extra time due to the slow handwriting

## The use of a word processor (AA section 5.8)

The use of a word processor in examinations cannot be granted to a candidate simply because they would rather type than write in examinations, or because they can work faster on a keyboard, or that they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working at Birch Wood School. Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in all subjects, as their methods of assessments may vary. The use of a word processor will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis. Birch Wood School will build a picture of need of students during their time at the school to establish

their normal way of working, such as the use of a word processor for extended writing during lessons, small group work, examinations and mocks for example.

The use of a word processor in non-examination assessment components (for example controlled assessments or coursework components) will be considered standard practice unless it is prohibited by the specification. Students using a word processor at Birch Wood School as their normal way of working for extended writing will have the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled unless they have had additional testing that indicates that the student has met the published criteria for a scribe, and an approved application has been made.

An application for extra time can be applied for if it is judged that the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties in interpreting questions and formulating their typed answers meet the published criteria for extra time, and an approved application has been made.

Word processors use in examinations It is essential that the integrity of the examination is maintained whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidates.

The use of a word processor cannot be granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Where a candidate has used a word processor in an examination an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be included with the candidate's typed script. For the academic year 2025 – 2026, AQA and Pearson **DO NOT** require a cover sheet. Eduqas **DOES** require a cover sheet.

Birch Wood School ensures that it complies with ICE 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026, section 14.25, 14.26 and 14.27 relating to the use of word processors. Candidates must be reminded to ensure that their Centre Number (25303), candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer: The candidate must number each page appropriately. Candidates should use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking. Invigilators must remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals in addition to the 'autosave' set up on each laptop where possible by ICT Support at Birch Wood School.

Centres may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts. 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 file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.