

Word Processing in Exams Policy 2023-24

This policy details how Caterham School manages and administers the use of word processing facilities in examinations and assessments.

This policy is updated and reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the exam board regulations. (JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) 2023/24 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document 2023/24, as well as the Cambridge Handbook 2023 (International))

Key principles

- The use of word processors is allowed in order to remove barriers for candidates who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate

GCSE and GCE exam boards are clear that the use of word-processing facilities in public exams **cannot** be granted to candidates purely due to a personal preference for typing or because a candidate can work faster on a keyboard.

In line with these rules Caterham pupils are only permitted to use word processing facilities in examinations (both internal and external) if they would benefit from a word processor because of at least one of the following difficulties:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- illegible handwriting

The exam boards also insist that the use of a word processor also reflects the candidate's 'normal mode of working'; this means that all extended writing tasks both in class and for homework should be typed.

In order to meet these requirements for public exams, Caterham School permits typing in class assessments or extended writing, and as a pupil's normal way of working only if the following conditions have been met:

1. A need has been established and its use is recommended by a school approved specialist assessor, medical specialist, or occupational therapist.
2. Formal approval of this arrangement has been given by the school's SENDCo. This approval can only be given after a handwriting speed and legibility assessment. Typing skills need to be of sufficient speed and accuracy to be able to cope both in class and in examinations.

3. The use of a laptop/word-processor is the pupil's normal mode of working. Regular use of a laptop or word-processing facility, without the SENDCo's approval, does not formally constitute a 'normal mode of working'.

The only exception to this 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.

Notes

Pupils may not require the use of a word processor in each subject or examination paper. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands on our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet.

Pupils who have been granted use of a word processor in public exams are advised to type all homework, coursework and timed in-class assessments with spelling and grammar check (and predictive text) switched off, as in all examinations these functions are disabled (unless the pupil has been awarded use of a scribe by the awarding body - see below).

In examinations the school will:

- provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled, (unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or use of voice recognition technology by the awarding body, in which case the candidate may type with spelling and grammar check switched on as an alternative arrangement)
- only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre
- allow candidates to use a word processor to type certain questions, such as those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination) or spreadsheets
- not include graphic packages or computer-aided design software on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- not include voice recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- not allow the word processor to be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission from the awarding body to have use of a scribe in examinations.

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