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Use of Laptops & Computers in Exams & Assessments Policy

September 2019

USE OF LAPTOP POLICY IN EXAMS AND ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

The number of pupils using laptop computers for school work is increasing. The School is committed to ensuring that pupils are properly prepared and can enjoy the maximum benefits arising computer and laptop use; that teachers understand how to accommodate their pupils' laptop use; and that parents, staff and pupils are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, in line with JCO regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA) and Instructions for conducting examinations 2016/ 17 (ICE). See also the guidelines set by the University of Birmingham School on Access Arrangements.

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- To enable all pupils to achieve the best possible for their ability.
- To provide guidelines for pupils and teachers on safe, appropriate and efficient laptop use.
- To outline how the school operates in line with JCO and ICE guidelines for laptop use in exams and assessments.

Who may use a laptop as their normal way of working in school?

Pupils with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers which exist and thus prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. Use of a word processor is only granted if it is appropriate to a pupil's needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand). Permission must have been received from Kate Campbell, the SENDCO.

The following conditions must be met before permission will be given for a pupil to use a laptop as their normal way of working in school:

- A specific recommendation has been received from either:
 - An educational psychologist, specialist teacher or medical expert.
 - The School's Learning Support Co-ordinator.
- Touch-typing speed should exceed handwriting speed (c.30 wpm).
- Pupil and parents have signed the ICT Acceptable Use policy.
- The laptop is signed out by ICT.

The SENDCO will confirm the list of laptop users. Ideally all concerns related to possible laptop use should be referred to the SENDCO in time for arrangements to be in place at the start of the course in order to show normal way of working to meet JCO requirements. These will be confirmed no later than the beginning of Year 9 for a normal way of working to be justified and the use of a laptop in the examinations to be granted.

The Examinations Officer will liaise with IT support over requisite technical support and the provision of 'clean' laptops.

How and when is a laptop used?

In class:

- Laptop use is allowed with the agreement of the subject department head and the subject teacher.
- Pupils must save work before the end of the lesson which is saved to their curriculum area. We would advise pupils to save their work to a USB stick too.
- Work on the laptop must be saved in an area so others can easily view their work should they want to. Work must be submitted in an acceptable format: a minimum of 12 point font and double spaced unless otherwise instructed.
- Pupils must ensure that laptops are returned to ICT after school to be charged.
- Laptops must be capable of being run on battery, and that battery power should always be used. For health and safety reasons mains cables can be used only with specific permission to do so.
- Laptops must be on mute at all times.
- Any integrated recording devices must be disabled at all times.
- Pupils will not be allowed to use any unauthorised software or access the internet in lessons unless given permission for internet use in order that a specific task may be completed.

Homework:

- Written homework tasks must be printed at home and, where appropriate, stuck into an exercise book or placed in a file as required by each department.
- Work must be submitted in an acceptable format: a minimum of 12 point font and double spaced unless otherwise instructed.
- Pupils may email homework to teachers only with the express prior permission of that teacher.

Controlled Assessments and Course Work:

The school provides access to word processors to pupils in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

Examinations:

The University of Birmingham School complies with AA Adjustments for pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows:

- 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 pupil.
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Pupils may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different

demands of our pupils, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

- The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Pupils are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/ coursework.
- Pupils are made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/ coursework).
- The use of a word processor for pupils is only granted if it reflects the support given to the pupil as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - a) in the classroom; or
 - b) working in small groups for reading and/ or writing; or
 - c) literacy support lessons; or
 - d) literacy intervention strategies; and/ or
 - e) In internal school tests and mock examinations.

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.

If a pupil does not demonstrate that a word processor is needed as a normal way of working, they will not be granted the use of a word processor in the examination.

The School allows pupils to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. The school is also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where pupils will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The pupil avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

In all cases, the school:

- Ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each pupil's typed script.
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a pupil because he/ she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/ she uses a laptop at home.

Spelling and grammar checks and predictive tools will be disabled (in very specific circumstances an Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher Assessor may recommend differently) as will any connection to the internet.

The School will provide a clean memory stick and the student must save work on this at regular intervals.

Scripts will be printed out on School printers as soon as each examination ends. The pupil must be present for this to check that all pages have been printed and then sign each page.

Word processors and their programmes

The University of Birmingham School complies with ICE 8.8 Word processors instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used
- an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a pupil
- where required, pupils are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- word processors are accommodated in such a way that other pupils are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- where a pupil using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used
- word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- documents are printed after the examination is over
- pupils are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- word processed scripts are inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- pupils are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc when using a word processor
- graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the pupil has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the pupil has permission to use a scribe or relevant software

- word processors are not used on the pupil's behalf by a third party unless the pupil has
- permission to use a scribe
- Laptops and tablets
- University of Birmingham School further complies with ICE 8.8 instructions by ensuring:
- pupils will be provided with access to a laptop/ tablet in the main examination hall which
- is either connected to a mains power supply or is 'free standing' with a battery, checked
- to ensure sufficient capacity for the entire duration of the examination, allowing for any additional time.
- pupils are reminded that their centre number, pupil number and the unit/ component
- code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- pupils using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; pupils are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- pupils are instructed to appropriately number each page
- pupils are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind pupils to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/ tablet
- pupils are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Pupils using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Pupils will be seated in the main examination hall unless they have another access arrangement which requires separate invigilation, for example a read aloud.
- Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors is no different to any other invigilation since pupils are accommodated in the main exam room.

Liaison with Parents

The SENDCO will be responsible for liaising with relevant parents so that they are fully aware of the school's procedures. She will ensure that they have a copy of this policy.