



Use of Laptops / Word Processors during exams (Exams)

Calthorpe Park School

May 2025

Several small additions/updates to the previous version
as per notes at the end of the policy

Use of Laptops & Word Processors during Exams Policy (Exams)

Centre name	Calthorpe Park School
Centre number	58333
Policy Date	May 2025
Policy produced by	Sian Cosgrove
Policy reviewed by	Emma Jones
Date of next review	May 2026

Introduction

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement. (AA 4.2.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled student preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled student. (AA 4.2.2)

Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AA 4.2.3)

Students may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the student. SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis. (AA 4.2.1)

The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage a student. (AA 4.2.7)

The student must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Calthorpe Park School complies with AA (chapter 4) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, (section 5.8) Word processor and ICE (sections 14.20-25) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The use of a word processor

Calthorpe Park School will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a student with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a student if it is appropriate to their needs
- Needs may include
 - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
 - a medical condition
 - a physical disability
 - a sensory impairment
 - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

- poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the student will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- consider the needs of the student at the start of the student's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the student's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the student takes an exam or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

Calthorpe Park will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a student because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a student would be

- in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all students (AA 5.8.4)

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A student using a word processor is accommodated either in the main Hall or in a different room depending on the number of students taking the examination and number of word processor user

In compliance with the regulations Calthorpe Park

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- (where a student is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point) checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the student's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the student is 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 (ICE 14.22)

The default software used by the candidates is Exam Writepad which automatically inserts the student's name, centre number, unit /component code at the top of each page. However, if a student is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances once the student has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer (see below). The student is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

- ensures the student understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the student is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (Note: laptops are configured to "auto save" every two minutes but it is good practice to expect candidates to manually save during their exam.)
- instructs the student to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24) (ICE 14.25)

Calthorpe Park will ensure the word processor

- is only used in a way that ensures a student's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other students are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the student access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the student 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
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the student has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the student 's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Portable storage medium

Calthorpe Park will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- is provided by us
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam is over

Calthorpe Park will ensure

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or provide students with a memory stick so work can be printed from printer located elsewhere
- the student is present to verify that the work printed is his or their own
- the student either checks that their name, candidate number, the exam's unit/component code is correctly included in the header/footer on every page, adding/correcting it as needed.
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the student's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)

Storage of word-processed scripts after the exam

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 electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body (ICE 14.27)

The criteria Calthorpe Park School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam students, as directed by the head of centre, is that students handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a student may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

Awarding word processors

There are also exceptions where a student may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the student's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other students.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, 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 problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors specifically for examinations are kept in secure storage by the Examinations Officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of students approved to use them in an exam session, the IT rooms will be used.

The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

Changes for 2025

Adjustment to referencing the automatic inclusion of the header/footer and that students should check this is added correctly at the time of printing.

Added reference to laptops being configured to "auto save" every 2 minutes but encouraging candidates to manually save in addition.

Added reference to storing electronic copies of scripts after the exam (ICE 14.27)

May 2025