



**CRANLEIGH**  
EX CULTU ROBUR

## LAPTOP AND WORD PROCESSOR POLICY

The School recognises that for some students with specific learning difficulties, a laptop may be the most appropriate method of organising and presenting their work. Candidates will be allowed to use a laptop in school as their normal, routine way of working where a need has been established, its use is recommended either by an educational psychologist approved by the School or by the Head of Learning Support and then sanctioned by the Deputy Head Academic.

**The School has a responsibility to support our pupils, but also to encourage their independence both now and in the future. Crucially, where the School allows the use of a laptop, this is where a need has been clearly established by a body of evidence and is to make up for a disadvantage, not to convey an advantage.**

### SCHOOL-BASED EVIDENCE

The School will need to ensure that any recommendation from an EP report, a previous school or teacher is tested and refined according to evidence gathered before it becomes a normal way of working. Parents and pupils should therefore not assume the immediate or continued use of a laptop. Stages that the Head of Learning Support may suggest prior to it becoming a normal way of working are:

- Lessons in touch typing to ensure that the speed of typing is equivalent to or better than the speed of handwriting with a very high level of accuracy
- Limited use in subjects as recommended by the Head of Learning Support
- Limited use in some internal examinations or tests, as recommended by the Head of Learning Support
- Use for preps and coursework, agreed by the teacher concerned and as recommended by the Head of Learning Support
- Proven use of other recommended strategies for planning and preparation prior to writing

The extent to which a laptop will be used will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, in the light of the evidence gathered.

### USE OF A LAPTOP

Candidates will be allowed to use a laptop in school as their routine, normal way of working under the following conditions:

1. A clear need has been established through school-based evidence, as previously.
2. Its use may have been recommended by an educational psychologist, but must be approved by the Head of Learning Support;

3. The candidate has received recommended training to ensure that typing is efficient, accurate (90% or better accuracy) and of sufficient speed to be able to cope in class;
4. The Head of Learning Support confirms in writing to the Deputy Head Academic and Housemaster/mistress that these conditions have been met;
5. The Deputy Head Academic then sanctions the use of a laptop as the normal method of working;
6. The candidate has been using the laptop as her/his routine way of working in any subject where she/he wishes to use a word processor (WP) in an examination and has had specific practice and rehearsal in the use of a WP under examination conditions.

Whilst the School accedes to The Joint Council for Qualification's (JCQ) recommendation for the use of word processors in examinations, the complexities outlined above mean that it will be unrealistic and not in the best interest of the majority of our candidates to use a WP in an examination unless they have been using it as their routine, normal method of working throughout their examination years (e.g. years 10 and 11 if they wish to use it for their GCSE examinations).

## LIMITATIONS TO LAPTOP USE

A subject teacher has the right to veto the use of a laptop in particular situations:

- Where its use might be dangerous or problematic e.g. in a particular experiment in Chemistry
- Where particular exercises should not be done with computer assistance, e.g. maps and diagrams
- Where calculations are required without the assistance of computer functions such as in mathematics
- If an individual candidate, in any lesson, is using a laptop in such a way as to cause a distraction or disturbance to the learning of others

Some school and home work may still be required to be hand-written to support the development of handwriting skills.

## DETAILED PROCEDURES

Candidates should not expect always to have access to mains power and are therefore advised to have a spare battery.

All written work, which would normally be done in exercise books during lessons, is to be printed out nightly at home or in school and filed appropriately so that candidates possess a hard copy of all their work filed in ring binders or pasted into exercise books.

Candidates should use a plain font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, Verdana) and allow room for teachers' comments.

Spell Check can normally be used on all pieces of work except in examinations.

If there are problems with a laptop during lessons, the candidate should immediately stop using it and switch to pen and paper.

Many internal examinations utilise structured papers which require candidates to answer on the question papers. There may be situations in which papers require extended answers and candidates are allocated to a room where they will use a school word processor.

In public examinations candidates will use a school word processor using Windows and Word. Candidates are strongly advised to use these routinely.

Candidates should not expect the School's technicians to maintain their machines or undertake repairs to them.

## **BACK-UP**

Candidates are required to have all major pieces of coursework on the school systems, so that the work is automatically backed up. Candidates are also advised to back-up their work on to a separate hard drive on a regular basis – ideally weekly – but at the very least at each half term.

## **PRINTING WORK**

If candidates save work on memory sticks, it can be printed from almost any machine in the School. Printers are available in the Library, IT rooms and many other subject locations around the School, as well as Boarding Houses. With staff permission, candidates may print their work in these areas.

## **ASSISTANCE WITH LAPTOPS**

The Head of Learning Support will be available to:

- Help candidates to establish a daily routine and encourage them to operate in an organised and independent way.
- Act as a trouble-shooter for general staff queries concerning laptop users and their problems.
- Advise on outside help for keyboard competency skills.

Candidates may also seek technical advice from IT support.

## **SECURITY OF EQUIPMENT**

- All laptops and other equipment are to be security marked with the user's identity and postcode.
- Adequate insurance cover should be arranged by parents to cover damage or loss.
- The School does not accept liability for damage to or loss of any laptop computers, which will remain the responsibility of the owner at all times.

## USE OF WORD PROCESSORS IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

The School adheres to The Joint Council for Qualification's recommendation for the use of word processors in examinations.

Specifically, the School is allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the School and is appropriate to their 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.

The use of a WP at a previous school does not automatically mean that a candidate will be allowed to use one at Cranleigh. These decisions are delegated by the exam boards to individual schools who must make their own judgements.

A use of a word processor cannot be granted in very close proximity to the date of the examinations. The use of a word processor must have been the candidate's normal way of working within the centre for at least two terms before being used in examinations. Furthermore, there should be regular checking that the candidates are using their laptop as their normal way of working by the Learning Support department, the candidate's subject teacher and their tutor and Housemaster/mistress.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate 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. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs. For example, a candidate with:

- 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

This list is not exhaustive.

In addition, the following points are taken from The Joint Council for Qualification's (JCQ) recommendation for the use of word processors in examinations and refer to the use of a WP and 25% extra time:

- A candidate has a below average free writing speed when handwriting and qualifies for 25% extra time. However, using a word processor is her normal way of working within the centre. When typing she can produce her written work effectively and at a speed equivalent to an average writing rate. She has no further learning difficulties. The SENCo awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting, and only applies for 25% extra time when she writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics and Science examinations.
- A candidate with significant learning difficulties has a below average speed of writing and below average scores in areas of cognitive processing and reading speed. As using a word processor is his normal way of working within the centre he has been able to improve his typing speed to match the equivalent average writing rate. However, he has persistent and significant difficulties in interpreting questions and formulating his typed answers. He is given 25% extra time, as well as the use of a word processor, as both arrangements are appropriate to his needs.

Further examples of where it is appropriate for a candidate to use a WP are given in Appendix A.

Where a candidate is authorised to use a WP as their routine, normal way of working as per School policy and therefore may use it in examinations, the Head of Learning Support will make contact with the candidate to arrange in which specific examinations they wish to use a word processor. The School will make decisions on which subjects and papers are suitable for a WP.

Only the relevant software applications will be available; spell-check, grammar check and the thesaurus will not be enabled. There will be instructions informing candidates how to set up documents with all the relevant personal details. The candidate must save their work at regular intervals onto the desktop.

It is the responsibility of a member of Learning Support to finish the examination, print off 2 copies of the work and get the candidate to authenticate the relevant hard copy, with the subject, their candidate number and name clearly written at the top of each page that has been printed out. Until this has been completed to their satisfaction, the candidate is required to remain in the room.

Opportunities to rehearse the use of a WP are available in the period leading up to public examinations. Without this practice, it is unlikely to be in the best interest of the candidate to use the WP in an examination. The use of a transcript where a candidate's handwriting may be hard to decipher at times is no longer permissible. Where a candidate's handwriting is illegible he/she should use a word processor. If a word processor is not appropriate to the candidate's needs then he/she must meet the appropriate criteria for a scribe. (section 8.7 of the JCQ booklet).

## Appendix A

**The following examples are taken from The Joint Council for Qualification's recommendation for the use of word processors in examinations:**

- A candidate wishes to use a word processor since this is her normal way of working within the centre. However, the candidate additionally wishes to use the spelling and grammar check facility. Given that she does not meet the published criteria for a scribe, the candidate cannot use the spelling and grammar check facility. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out in the JCQ 'ICE' booklet.
- A candidate taking a GCSE Computer Science paper wishes to use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled. However, the paper is testing his ability to proofread a document. The SENCo refuses the use of the spelling and grammar check facility. He uses the word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled (switched off).
- A candidate who has significant learning difficulties has quite legible writing. However, he makes many omissions and cannot order his ideas correctly. His written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. He requests a word processor and this is granted by the SENCo. The use of a word processor allows him to correct text, sequence his answers and reflects his normal way of working within the centre.
- A blind candidate asks to use a word processor in his examinations. He also requests the use of a screen reader to allow him to 'read' back and check the answers he has typed. These arrangements are permitted when using a word processor in his examinations. However, if the candidate also wants to use predictive text and/or the spelling and grammar check facility he must meet the published criteria for a scribe, with an approved application in place.