SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL

USE OF LAPTOPS IN EXAMINATIONS POLICY

JANUARY 2026

To be reviewed January 2027

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all other Sacred Heart High School Policies

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1 GENERAL

This policy is updated annually on the publication of JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

Where the use of a word processor in examinations/assessments meets JCQ criteria, Sacred Heart High School will:

- 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 (NWOW) within the centre and is appropriate to their needs
- Acknowledge that controlled assessment or coursework can normally be completed on word processors unless prohibited by the specification
- Permit a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Ensure that a JCQ word processor cover sheet is completed and attached to the candidate's word-processed script before despatching to the examiner or awarding body (if required).

2 ALLOWING THE USE OF WORD PROCESSORS IN EXAMINATIONS – WITH SPLD

Pupils will be allowed to use a laptop in examinations under the following conditions:

- They have a diagnosed learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- A need has been established and its use is recommended by an Educational Psychologist /specialist assessor approved by the School.
- The student has been using the laptop as their normal way of working (NWOW) in any subject where they wish to use a laptop in an examination and has had specific practice and rehearsal in the use of a laptop under examination conditions (e.g. in mock exams).

3 ALLOWING THE USE OF WORD PROCESSORS IN EXAMINATIONS - WITHOUT SPLD

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working (NWOW) (in the classroom and/or mock examinations/internal school tests) within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

Only candidates with the following conditions who would benefit from the use of a word processor may be considered:

- a medical condition affecting the speed or legibility of handwriting;
- a physical disability affecting the speed or legibility of handwriting;
- a sensory impairment;
- illegible handwriting;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;

- a temporary medical condition e.g. broken arm.

4 PROVISION OF LAPTOPS TO EXAM CANDIDATES

Sacred Heart High School will ensure that JCQ regulations are strictly adhered to and provide a laptop according to the following regulations.

A word processor:

- will be used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- will have been cleared of any previously stored data. A memory stick cleared of any previously stored data will be provided for the candidate.
- will be in good working order at the time of the examination;
- will be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator will be used.
- will have the facility to print from a portable storage medium (memory stick). This will be done after the examination is over by the Exams Officer or designated invigilator. The candidate will be present to verify that the work printed is their own and sign each page. Word processed scripts will be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- will be used to produce scripts under secure conditions.
- will not perform skills which are being assessed;
- will not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication:
- will not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator, spreadsheet etc:
- will not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- will not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script will have a scribe cover sheet attached where required), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.
- will not include voice recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

A word processor cover script (Form 4) will be printed from the JCQ website and attached securely to the candidate's type script (if required by the examining body).

The candidate will be reminded to save their work at regular intervals and to use a predefined document template with the correct 12pt font and double line spacing.

The candidate will be reminded to ensure that their Centre Number, Candidate Number, Candidate Name and the Unit/Component Code of the exam paper appear on each page as a header or footer.

The Exams Officer will issue laptop users with an instruction sheet (see appendix 1) prior to the commencement of the summer exam series.

5 RATIFICATION

This policy has been approved and ratified by the Headteacher in January 2025. The policy will be reviewed for January 2026.

Mrs S O'Donovan
Headteacher

APPENDIX 1: USING LAPTOPS IN EXAMS

Approval has been granted for you to use a laptop in exams. If you have not used a laptop in an exam before, and even if you have, you should make yourself familiar with the following procedures.

- A laptop will be provided for your exam together with a USB stick.
- Login details will be provided
- The spell checker and grammar check will be disabled
- Access to the internet will also be disabled.
- When the invigilators tell you (and not before), you should fill in the details in the header with your name, candidate number and exam paper reference.
- The footer will auto fill in the date, page number and total number of pages. These details are required by the exam board.
- Once all the details have been filled in – you are ready to type.
- Make sure you number the questions you are answering.
- You should also fill in the boxes on the answer book provided by the exams board as this will be sent along with your typed script.
- Make sure you save your work at regularly intervals.
- At the end of the exam you will be expected to save your work onto the memory stick
- When exam papers are collected you will be required to accompany the exams officer to a nearby office where the script will be printed.
- You will be asked to countersign each page of your script for authentication purposes and a cover sheet will be attached to it if required by the appropriate exam board.
- Your script will be placed inside your answer booklet.

If you have any difficulties during the exam please raise your hand and an invigilator will attend to you.