Bowbrook School

BOWBROOK HOUSE SCHOOL

WORD-PROCESSOR POLICY (Exams)

2026/27

THIS POLICY IS REVIEWED AND UPDATED ANNUALLY TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS

KEY STAFF INVOLVED IN THE POLICY

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	**L Kimberlee**
Exams Officer	**J Ironside**
Senior Leader(s)	**C Allen** **A Farr** **R Mills**
IT Manager	**D Bell**

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References in this policy to AARA and ICE relate to the current JCQ publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for Conducting Examinations effective from 1 September 2026.

The purpose of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

This policy is written in accordance with the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and reflects the centre's responsibilities under current examination regulations. The policy should be read alongside the centre's Access Arrangements Policy, Exams Policy and relevant safeguarding, equality and SEND documentation.

The use of a word processor in examinations and assessments is an access arrangement and reasonable adjustment which must be awarded and managed in accordance with current JCQ regulations. The centre will ensure that any arrangement granted is based on the candidate's normal way of working and that the integrity of the assessment is maintained at all times.

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA), effective for the 2026/27 academic year;
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE), effective from 1 September 2026;
- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, which require centres to have appropriate arrangements, policies and procedures in place for the secure and proper conduct of examinations;

The Head of Centre retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the centre complies with all applicable JCQ regulations. The SENDCo, Exams Officer and IT support staff are responsible for implementing the requirements of this policy and ensuring that word processors used in examinations meet all JCQ requirements relating to security, functionality and assessment integrity.

INTRODUCTION

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

The following principles are applied to access arrangements at Bowbrook House School:

- A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

  Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCos (or equivalent role) must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

  The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

- The SENDCo (or equivalent role) must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy details how Bowbrook House School complies with Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (Word processor) and JCQ ICE 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 CRITERIA BOWBROOK HOUSE SCHOOL USES TO AWARD AND ALLOCATE WORD PROCESSORS FOR EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the Head of Centre, is that candidates who handwrite in lessons/class tests/internal exams will handwrite their GCSE exams. Candidates using ICT as their 'normal way of working' in lessons, class tests/internal exams, will use ICT for their GCSEs

A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in examinations where:

- the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology
- the candidate has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working in the centre and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates

Bowbrook House School will:

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate where appropriate to their 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
- poor handwriting

- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification)

NB: This list is not exhaustive.

Bowbrook House School will not:

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

Additionally, the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate:

- 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
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

ARRANGEMENTS AT THE TIME OF THE ASSESSMENT FOR THE USE OF A WORD PROCESSOR

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in one of the ICT rooms or in a separate room if working with a reader/practical assistant and/or in a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs.

In compliance with the regulations, Bowbrook House School:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise -Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- where a candidate 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 candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam
- ensures the candidate is reminded to check 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
- if a candidate is using a software application that does not allow for the insertion of a header/footer, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate 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 candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g., page 1 of 6
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost)

- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners

Bowbrook House School will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets
- 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 candidate 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 computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

PORTABLE STORAGE MEDIUM

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g., a memory stick) used:

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

PRINTING THE SCRIPT AFTER THE EXAM HAS ENDED

The centre will ensure:

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or their own
- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate's typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body's instructions
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they are instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate 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

Bowbrook House School:

- may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts as 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 file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

CENTRE SPECIFIC PROCESSES

ALLOCATING WORD PROCESSORS AT THE TIME OF THE ASSESSMENT

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors/desktops will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCo and the Exams Officer.

Candidates using ICT as their 'normal way of working' and without additional access arrangements, will be sat in either the main exam hall or, in one of the 2 ICT rooms in the main school building. Distances between candidates and screens will be in place according to JCQ regulations.

Where candidates are linked to a printer, they will be escorted to the printer by the Examinations Officer. Once printed, the pupil will sign the bottom of their script to confirm it is their own work.

Where a mobile storage device is used, the invigilator will escort the pupil following the exam to the printer. The invigilator will hand the device directly to the Examinations Officer. Once printed, the pupil will sign the bottom of their script to confirm it is their own work.

In prevention of loss of script, electronic copies of word-processed scripts will be retained securely and in-line with JCQ regulations. The Head of Centre will confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

All word processors used in examinations will have no access to generative artificial intelligence tools, internet-based AI services, AI writing assistants, predictive composition software or any application capable of generating examination responses. Devices will be configured in accordance with JCQ requirements to ensure the integrity and security of the assessment.

MONITORING

The Exams Officer, SENDCo and IT Manager will review arrangements annually and whenever JCQ regulations are updated to ensure examination devices and procedures remain fully compliant.

This policy will be reviewed annually upon publication of updated JCQ regulations, including Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA), Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) and General Regulations for Approved Centres, and amended as necessary to maintain compliance with current regulatory requirements and centre practice.