



Access arrangements and Word processor policy

**St John Fisher Catholic
High School**

School:	St John Fisher Catholic High School
Date adopted by Governing Body:	
Signed (Chair):	Mr D Mallin
Signed (Headteacher):	Mrs A Rigby

Produced by:	Mrs L Thorley/Mrs L Lewis
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Date to be reviewed:	Comments:
November 2019	

At St John Fisher High School we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of School community and its life, all will be treated equally, with respect and dignity, free from discrimination and harassment. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, appearance, health conditions, home or personal situation, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity (refers to staff / employment), socio-economic background and special educational needs. Our School will tackle the barriers, which could lead to unequal outcomes for these protected groups, ensuring there is equality of access and that we celebrate and value the diversity within our School community. The School will work actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

‘Learning together as a community in Christ.’

St John Fisher School Access Arrangement policy follows the regulations and guidance which are issued annually by the Joint Council for Qualifications for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

These are adjustments for candidates with substantial disabilities and learning difficulties.

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment (examination or coursework). They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- access the assessment;
- show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see section 1.8, page 8). The definitions and procedures in this document relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille.

The disability must be substantial, persistent and long term, unless it is a temporary injury.

Access Arrangements

All arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment and before the published deadline apart from applications due temporary injury or impairment.

Access Arrangements can only be applied for if the candidate meets all of the following criteria:

- They must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- The Access Arrangement/s being applied must be their normal way of working;
- Their disability is persistent and significant;
- There must be evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- Teaching staff must provide evidence of the need and the provision of reasonable adjustments in the classroom, to meet the candidate's needs, due to their disability.

Written confirmation must be provided to say that without the Access Arrangement applied for the candidate would continue to be at a substantial disadvantage

How Access Arrangements are managed at St John Fisher Catholic High School

Responsibilities

Access Arrangements are overseen by the SENCO – Ed Hanley.

Access Arrangement Assessments are carried out by our Specialist Assessor- Ed Hanley. CP3A, MA (SEND), National Award SEND Coordination.

Checks are made on the annual release of the 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' booklet that the qualifications above still meet the requirements necessary to carry out assessments.

Access Arrangements are processed and implemented by the Examinations Officer (assisted by the SENCo).

The Access Arrangements Process

Years 7 and 8

- All students who have been identified as having Special Educational Needs or a disability at their primary school or who have been identified during years 7 and 8, will be monitored to build up a history of need and provision.

Year 9

- We send letters to parents/carers of students who have a history of persistent and significant need in the summer term to let them know that their child may be included in the group of students to be formally assessed. This will either be later that term or at the start of the autumn term;
- Students involved with Outside Agencies such as the Autism or Speech and Language Teams may have additional assessments.

Year 10

- If there is sufficient evidence and history of need, an application for Access Arrangements will be made in the autumn term, in consultation with the student and parents/carers;

- Parents/carers and the student will be informed as to whether or not the application has been approved;
- All students with Access Arrangements will, apart from those with some sensory or physical disabilities, will be designated as having special educational needs;
- Students will be issued with a card showing which Access Arrangements they are entitled to.

Year 11

- Students with Access Arrangements will practice using them in examination situations during Mock Exams in Year 10 and 11;
- All students with Access Arrangements must continue to be in need of the arrangements and use it for the duration of the examination series otherwise it may be withdrawn.

Concerns about your child

It is important that if you think your child may have special educational needs or a disability that you talk to their teachers and the SENCO as **early as possible** in order for us to provide suitable support and build up a history of need.

Private Assessments

Prior to commissioning a private assessment which may potentially be used for Access Arrangements a private assessor must contact the school **before the assessment is undertaken**. The Joint Council for Qualifications states:

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information.

This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

Failure to do this may lead to us being unable to use the report.

Sixth Forms and Colleges of Further Education

If a student had Access Arrangements in Years 10/11 then they can be re-applied for providing there is evidence from teachers that the student continues to need and use them. Students moving to colleges can request copies of their Access Arrangement evidence to take with them.

The Use of Word Processors.

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, early in the autumn term, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2017/18* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2017/18*.

Principles for using a word processor

St John Fisher Catholic School complies with AA section 4 regulations as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties;
- 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 candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates 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 candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom (where appropriate); or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or

- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal school tests/examinations
- mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre.
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it 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).

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in controlled assessments or NEA components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
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(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.
- Are 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 candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script.
- Ensures in Functional Skills English (Reading and Writing components) the use of a word processor with the spell check facility switched on is permitted for all candidates.
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor 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.

Word processors and their programmes

St John Fisher Catholic School complies with ICE 8.8 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 candidate
 - where required, candidates 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 candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
 - where a candidate 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
 - candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
 - word processed scripts are attached / inserted into any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
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- 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.
 - candidates 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 candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a scribe cover sheet attached), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
 - voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
 - word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops, Tablets and Word Processors

St John Fisher Catholic School further complies with ICE 8.8 instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer

- candidates 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; candidates 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
- each page is appropriately numbered.
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- candidates granted the use of a word processor are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed off is their own.

Accommodating word processors in examinations

The use of word processors are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Word processors are used by candidates in separate classrooms.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:

- Invigilation arrangements are in place to monitor the use of word processors.

The criteria that St John Fisher Catholic High School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations." [AA 5.8]

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

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

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 and specialist IT accounts will be allocated by the IT department and exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

Statement produced by: **Mrs Alison Rigby, Headteacher**

Statement date: