
Thomas Keble School Use of Laptops Policy

Thomas Keble School believes that handwriting is a skill for life and that it should be developed alongside the typing skills that our students develop as they continue through life. This belief is supported by JCQ who identify the need for schools to support their students to develop legible handwriting. This means that our initial response to a student who has difficulty writing legibly is to give them additional support with their handwriting so that this skill is developed rather than lost by reverting purely to word processing.

Thomas Keble School is committed to supporting all of our students to achieve their full potential.

However, we do not have the resources to fund examination enabled laptops to all students (personal laptops cannot be used in examinations) and therefore have to ensure that we do not advantage some students over others.

“A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard or because he/she uses a laptop at home.” (**Joint Council for Qualifications [JCQ] adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022 section 5.8.4**).

Transition from primary or another school to Thomas Keble School:

If a student's normal way of working at primary school (or another secondary school) is to use a laptop we would need evidence of this normal way of working as this must be on our file for inspectors to explain the need and normal way of working. For example, a letter from the SENCo and copies of word-processed examinations or work or exercise books with word-processed work stuck in.

KS3:

We are very keen to support students in their acquisition of legible handwriting as this is a skill for life. We run handwriting interventions to enable the development of legible handwriting. We assess students for whom we have a history of need for possible examination access arrangements for GCSE in the second half of Year 9.

GCSE:

There should be enough evidence to demonstrate a requirement by the beginning of Year 10 or, at the very latest, after the Year 10 internal examinations.

Next steps if interventions fail:

If interventions have not enabled the student to write legibly we will then investigate to see if further interventions are required or if the student would be eligible for the examination access arrangement of a word processor. Parents are informed of the results of these assessments by letter.

Regulations which we are required to follow:

Examination access arrangements are to level the playing field and “allow candidates/learners 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.” (JCQ)

A laptop in examinations needs a specific and appropriate need to warrant its use so that the candidate is **not having an advantage over all other candidates**. If their writing is illegible because they are not taking care then that is not an appropriate need.

Some appropriate uses are:

- 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.
- Handwriting which has been hard to decipher over a number of years without improvement **(even though there have been documented interventions)**.
- A candidate who has substantial problems with organisation of ideas and this has been documented over a number of years.

Student responsibility if laptop use is granted:

This need means that using a laptop will be their **normal way of working** as they cannot record their learning and demonstrate their knowledge without it. We will have evidence of their normal way of working (required for JCQ inspectors) because they will be word-processing their work in most lessons and homeworks. It is the student’s responsibility to print off their work and stick it into exercise books. Without this evidence that word-processing is their normal way of working they will not be able to use it in examinations.

In order to retain this access arrangement, it is also important that students follow the school policy on acceptable computer use.