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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

27 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your Child: Tiers of Entry - Summer 2022

As you are hopefully aware, our Year 11 parents evening is on Thursday 30th September. As outlined in my letter on the 20th September this event will take place online and appointments are now available for booking. This is a very important event to discuss your child's progress and to talk with their class teachers about areas they can continue to develop.

We know that a common question parents like to ask in some subjects is regarding what tier of paper their child will be entered for. At this stage I would request that you do not use the short meeting slot to discuss this topic as until the students have sat their mock exams in December and, any subsequent assessments in the early Spring term, we will not have a full understanding of how they can perform across a full range of skills under examination conditions. At present we are focusing on ensuring your child continues to progress and develop their knowledge and understanding of their GCSE subjects, so they are in the best place to sit these assessments. After we have reviewed their performance in these assessments, we as a school will make a decision on their tier of entry in subjects where this is relevant and inform you and the students regarding this decision. I have outlined below our rationale for tiers of entry:

Tiers of Entry:

- Parents and students do not choose the tier of exam they sit. The school will decide who is entered for higher or foundation tier when provisional entries are made in February of Year 11.
- GCSE tiers of entry will be based on current attainment as demonstrated by Year 11 mock examinations.
- Ofqual (the exams regulator) has been clear in the expectation that schools will enter students they believe expected to attain Grades 1 -5 for foundation tiers. As an example, in 2019 (the last year that students sat examinations) GCSE mathematics only 39.7% of candidates nationally achieved grade 5 or higher. It has been recommended that borderline grade 5 – 6 and above candidates are entered for the higher tier. This attainment at a high grade 5 or 6 MUST be consistent across all aspects of study to be recommended for the higher tier. In 2019 GCSE mathematics only 24.9% of candidates nationally achieved grade 6 or higher. It should also be noted that on Wirral more than 30% of pupils are selected by 'ability' at the age of 11. Whilst we appreciate that COVID 19 has caused significant disruption to pupils learning everywhere, at the present time our guidance is that exams this summer will return to some form of normality and reflect similar requirements to the examinations prior to the pandemic. We therefore need to assume that there will be similarly high expectations set for the students.
- Only students who are consistently demonstrating the grades indicated in this letter, or better, on higher GCSE papers will be entered for higher tier in February of Year 11.
- Students who are considering applying for sixth form courses in science subjects need to be aware that colleges such as Birkenhead Sixth Form are specifying a minimum of a GCSE grade 6 for entry to these courses. Grade 6 requires that pupils are sitting higher tier. Entry to higher tier is determined by progress and attainment to date and not a chosen future pathway.

Minimum indicative grades for entry to higher tier examinations

Subject:	End of Year 10 exam on Higher Tier Papers	Year 11 Mock (Dec 2021)* on Higher Tier Papers
Mathematics	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5
Spanish	High Grade 4	High Grade 5

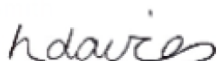
Subject:	End of Year 10 exam on Higher Tier Papers	Paper 1 Mock (Dec 2021)* on Higher Tier Papers	Paper 2 Mock (March 2022) on Higher Tier Papers
Biology	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	Middle Grade 5
Chemistry	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	Middle Grade 5
Physics	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	Middle Grade 5
Combined science	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	Middle Grade 5
Required on both Paper 1 & 2 Content			

*** Pupils who wish to be entered for higher but have not achieved the required grade on a higher paper in Y11 Christmas Mock, will have to re-sit all relevant papers in week beginning 28th February 2022. All papers are sat after school in pupil's own time.**

We are very pleased with the way the students have returned from the summer holiday ready to learn and do their best this year and thank you for supporting them in their studies.

Please contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Mrs H Davies
Deputy Headteacher