

20 April 2021

Dear Parent & Carer

### **Overview of process - Awarding of GCSE Grades 2021**

The 2021 examination series was cancelled at the instruction of central government. The processes for the awarding of grades in 2021 were drawn up by Ofqual (the exam's regulator) and the Department for Education. I am now in a position to update you as to how GCSE grades are to be awarded for the 2021 examination series.

Each school is required to have a policy regarding the awarding of grades in 2021 that meets the requirements set out by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Pensby High School has adopted the model policy set out by JCQ and this can be accessed using the link below:

<http://www.pensbyhighschool.org/gcse-2021-information/59613.html>

For each subject your child is studying, teachers within that department will use their professional judgement to objectively determine your child's GCSE grade based on evidence of their current attainment and attainment throughout the course. It is important to say that, much like with exams in normal years, the grades issued by teachers, schools and colleges will not take account of your child's potential. They will be a snapshot of the standard your child is performing at, based on a wide range of evidence.

In each subject, arrangements are in place to assess your child's current level of attainment on the work they have been taught. The school has produced a booklet 'Subjects Assessment Guide 2021 for Parents and Students' that can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.pensbyhighschool.org/gcse-2021-information/59613.html>

The 'Subjects Assessment Guide 2021 for Parents and Students' provides details of:

- (i) The evidence of previous assessments that will be considered when determining your child's 2021 GCSE grade
- (ii) The assessments that are being used in school now to determine your child's current level of attainment in each GCSE subject.

As a result, students will know the assessments that will be considered as evidence when teachers use their professional judgement to determine their grade. Students will have the opportunity to raise any concerns about the evidence being used; for example, if the evidence was affected by personal circumstances, such as illness. The school will make the final judgement about what evidence is to be included - this is not a negotiation, as the system has to be as fair as it can be in relation to the cohort as a whole.

Teachers will not tell you the grade they have submitted to the exam board.

Each exam board has produced materials to assist staff in assessing your child's current attainment in each subject. At Pensby High School these exam board produced materials are being used extensively in determining your child's current level of GCSE attainment, and they will be used to support previous assessments when determining your child's final grade.

It is important that parents and students understand that within each subject area teachers are working together to determine the grades that will be awarded for each child – it is not the decision of one teacher on their own. Equally, key assessments that are now being taken in school to assess current attainment are cross moderated by teachers, this is to ensure as far as is possible, that an equal standard is being applied across all teaching groups and that grades are awarded fairly as a result.

If you would like to know more about the processes being followed by teachers at Pensby High School, please use the link below to access the instructions given to staff in the school.

<http://www.pensbyhighschool.org/gcse-2021-information/59613.html>

As part of the quality assurance process within the school, staff are benchmarking their assessments against the previous performance of pupils in this school to check that standards are in line with recent years when GCSE examinations went ahead normally (i.e. the 2019, 2018 and 2017 GCSE examinations series).

The school will submit the grades that have been determined within each subject area by the deadline of the 18 June 2021. This year the exam boards have established a quality assurance process and may sample the evidence being used to support the grades being awarded in each subject area. No new assessments will take place once grades have been submitted by the deadline of the 18 June 2021.

JCQ have also produced a guide for students, parents and guardians and this can be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

It is important that every student attends school every day and gives their full commitment to ensure that they are demonstrating the highest level of attainment of which they are capable.

I hope this clarifies the process that the school has followed and how the exam boards will determine your final GCSE grades.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan  
Headteacher