



Pensby High School

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

20 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I want to thank you for all your help in starting this year so well, uniform, expectations and support for the ethos and culture of the school. The students have returned and we are back in the normal flow of the day-to-day and Year 11 have already started period 6 – thank you to both Year 11 and the staff who are giving their time so freely.

Results this year are hard to quantify as we move back to the same grading pattern as 2019 and we do not have a full national picture of data around the outcomes, but the indicative picture we have from our external data systems is that Year 11 again made progress above national average. This is testimony to the hard work of staff, you as parents, but more importantly the students. I am sure you are aware of the concerns around the disproportionate impact of COVID on the North of England and as a school we did experience really quite significant disruption to learning, so a big thank you to Year 11 and you as parents for all of your support last year.

We were also part of a peer observation process last year called Challenge Partners. School are visited by leaders from a number of other schools and a review of provision, outcomes and impacts on students is given within a scale of 1 to 4. This is not by any means an Ofsted inspection, but it is very useful to have other school leaders come to school and challenge what we are doing, thinking and planning and I am really pleased for both the staff and students that we were graded as a grade 1 (Leading). We are currently in the process of replacing our website, but I will ensure that a copy of the report is placed on either the new or existing website for you to read should you wish to.

I also wanted to be honest with you with regard to the cost of living increases and their impact on the school budget. You will know as well as I do, that everything has gone up in price. We see that in our homes, but for us as a school we see inflation across everything from photocopying paper, educational resources, materials to maintain and repair the buildings and the cost of food; however, nowhere more so than the cost of gas and electric.

As a school we were fortunate to be in a fixed price deal until last April, when our gas and electric cost the school just over £70,000 a year. We are now expecting to pay somewhere between £280,000 to £290,000 this year and we are projecting this to rise to over £500,000 next year. We cannot meet the rapid rises we are seeing across all costs from the current school budget and we will need to find efficiencies. We are in an old building, single pane, steel framed windows for the most part and a heating system the bulk of which is 70 years old. It is difficult to keep the buildings warm even when the costs associated with heating were much lower than now.

The reality is that in school, some areas matter more to students than others and we need to protect them. Breakfast club, quality and size of portions at lunch, teaching and learning need to be protected from the vagaries of funding as much as is possible, but that leaves very little left to cut.

As the weather becomes colder, we will delay putting the heating on for as long as possible and when we do put the heating on it will be to warm the buildings and attempt to maintain a temperature across the school

of around 19 degrees. It will, I am sure, for some students feel cold, but I would imagine it will mirror what many of us are doing at home this winter. I would ask that you take the time to reflect on the difficulty in maintaining the quality of education and outcomes for your children in this school or any other school given the pressure on school budgets. In effect schools find their budgets per students at around the same level as 2010, but schools are asked to do much more than they previously did and so something has to give. In our case it is the heating in the first instance.

We will still ask students to remove outdoor coats in lessons, but jumpers, thick tights or trousers instead of a skirt, white t-shirts under shirts etc. etc., will go some way to help.

It seems ridiculous to be writing this to you, almost Dickensian in its contents, but we simply do not have the income to match the rises in energy costs to date, let alone any future rises. Please bear with us.

Thank you again for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Flanagan', written in a cursive style.

Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher