



PENSBY
HIGH SCHOOL
Care Respect Inspire

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

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Dear Parent / Guardian

GCSE Results – Information Regarding Appeals

I wrote to you on 20 April 2021 to explain how GCSE grades would be awarded this year. As I explained to you 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). As you will already be aware, 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 has studied, teachers within that department have used their professional judgement to determine your child's GCSE grade based on evidence of their current attainment and attainment throughout the course. We have done this without fear or favour and ensured that marking and moderation has not rested solely with the teacher responsible for a group, but rather with the subject teachers as a body. Where possible we have sought further external advice with regards to grades awarded.

The school produced a booklet 'Subjects Assessment Guide 2021 for Parents and Students' that explained in advance the evidence that would be considered in each subject when determining grades and this 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' was emailed home and every student has had a printed copy, so your child will already be aware of what evidence has been used when determining their GCSE grade.

The school has been through an extensive programme of cross moderation and quality assurance prior to the grades being submitted to the GCSE awarding organisations (e.g. AQA, Edexcel etc). Following the submission of grades, the exam boards have requested samples of candidates work. These samples were returned to the awarding bodies in a timely manner and as of today's date, no further evidence has been requested.

What do I do if I'm not happy with my / my child's grade?

At the time of writing this letter, the quality assurance processes being undertaken by the exam boards still have some time to run. The school will only receive the confirmed GCSE grades immediately prior to their distribution to students on 12 August 2021.

The school has gone through a thorough process in determining the grades that have been submitted to the examination boards. The grades submitted are based on the evidence that both you and students were previously notified of. Assessment evidence completed by students have been marked against exam board

mark schemes and have been cross moderated within each department. As a result, the grades submitted are a true reflection of the evidence produced in each subject by each student.

Inevitably, there will be some students / parents who would have preferred a higher grade in a specific subject – unfortunately, however grades are determined, this is the case every year. In my experience most appeals / enquiries about grades relate to English Language and mathematics where 6th Form providers specify minimum grades to access level 3 courses. Staff in all subjects have already paid particular attention to students on the borderline between grades and rechecked the evidence of these students before grades were submitted.

Sadly, being disappointed with a grade is not grounds for an appeal.

Should you wish to make an appeal:

Before making an appeal please make sure you read the JCQ Guidance for Students, parents and guardians: GCSEs and AS/A Level in England Summer 2021 using the link below:

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

Having read the guidance and if you feel you have grounds for an appeal then the following steps are available to you.

Stage 1: centre review

If you don't think you have been issued with the correct grade, you can appeal to your school or college, who will review whether they:

- made an administrative error, e.g. they submitted an incorrect grade; they used an incorrect assessment mark when determining your grade.
- did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.

Stage 2: appeal to the exam board

If you still don't think you have the correct grade after the centre review is complete, you can ask your school or college to appeal to the exam board, who will review whether:

- the school or college made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement* in the choice of evidence from which they determined your grade and/or in the determination of your grade from that evidence.
 - * *Note: A reasonable judgement is one that is supported by evidence. An exercise of judgement will not be unreasonable simply because a student considers that an alternative grade should have been awarded, even if the student puts forward supporting evidence. There may be a difference of opinion without there being an unreasonable exercise of judgement. The reviewer will not remark individual assessments to make fine judgements but will take a holistic approach based on the overall evidence.*
- the school or college did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.
- the exam board made an administrative error, e.g. they changed your grade during the processing of grades

At both stages of the process you will need to submit your appeal to your school or college and give them your written consent to conduct the appeal or submit it to the exam board on your behalf. It's important to remember that your grade can go down, up or stay the same through either stage of the process.

If you wish to submit an appeal to Pensby High School then please use the following email:
gcsappeals2021@psf.wirral.sch.uk

Timeline for appeals.

Any appeal made to Pensby High School is classed as a non-priority appeal because a place at University is not dependant upon it. The fact that an application to a sixth form provider may be affected by the outcome of an appeal does not make it a priority appeal. Appeals submitted to Pensby High School will be processed when the school returns in September 2021.

10 August to end October: majority of non-priority appeals take place

10 August to 3 September: student requests centre review

10 August to 10 September: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 17 September: centre submits appeal to exam board

Finally, if you believe the exam board has made a procedural error in handling your appeal, you can apply to Ofqual's Exam Procedures Review Service to review the process undertaken by the exam board.

Please remember that there will be an autumn series of GCSE examinations available to your child – this will give them the opportunity to sit an actual GCSE paper marked by the exam board. GCSE examinations will be available in all subjects. If you wish to resit English Language or Mathematics then this **must** be taken at your sixth form provider. If you wish to resit any other subject then please email Miss A Layden (alayden@psf.wirral.sch.uk) in the Pensby High School office and she will make the necessary arrangements.

In the meanwhile I do hope that the vast majority of students will obtain the results they need to move onto the next stage of their education. If for any reason your child requires careers advice regarding next steps following the issuing of results, please would they contact Mrs Rowles (Careers Adviser) using this email address KRowles@psf.wirral.sch.uk. Mrs Rowles will contact them via their home phone number as recorded on the school's information management system.

I do understand that there aspects of this year's system that sit at odds with our understanding of the grading process as we have come to know it, but I remain certain that everyone will act in the best interests of the students. Whilst our results are in the hands of the awarding bodies rather than student's exam endeavours, everyone wishes to see hard work, application and effort rewarded and I am confident that we will see this happen.

Yours sincerely



K Flanagan
Headteacher