



Pensby High School

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

20 December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

As you are aware, Year 11 parents evening is on Thursday 15 February (booking will be live from Monday 29 January at 5pm). As outlined in my letter on the 27 September this event will take place in person. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and to talk with their class teachers about areas they can continue to develop in their learning. Equally it is an opportunity to reflect on how much has been achieved so far.

We are aware that some of you would like to know the tier of entry for students sitting, mathematics, Spanish and science GCSEs, but at this stage I would request that you do not use the short meeting slot to discuss this topic. Students sit their tiering exams in tiered subjects in the week beginning 4 March, we will not have a full understanding of how they can perform across a full range of skills under examination conditions until they have taken these assessments. At present we are focusing on ensuring your child continues to progress and develop their knowledge and understanding in 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, which is in turn guided by advice from the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (Ofqual) and examination board guidance:

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 provisionally in February of Year 11, with a further review at the end of March.
- GCSE tiers of entry will be based on current attainment as demonstrated by Year 11, including mock examinations in December and Spring term.
- 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 2023 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. It is possible to gain a grade 5 on the foundation 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 2023 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.
- 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 spring of Year 11, because the reality is that if a student slips below a level 5 on the higher paper, they will be awarded a grade U.
- Students who are considering applying for sixth form courses in science subjects need to be aware that colleges and sixth forms such as Birkenhead Sixth Form or Calday, 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. These colleges will be advised to contact the school regarding a student's current performance data.

Minimum indicative grades for entry to higher tier examinations

Subject:	End of Year 10 exam on Higher Tier Papers	Year 11 Mock (Dec 2019)* on Higher Tier Papers
Mathematics	High Grade 4	High Grade 5
Spanish	High Grade 4	High Grade 5

Subject:	End of Year 10 exam on Higher Tier Papers	Paper 1 Mock (Dec 2019)* on Higher Tier Papers	Paper 2 Mock (March 2020) on Higher Tier Papers
Biology	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	High Grade 5
Chemistry	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	High Grade 5
Physics	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	High Grade 5
Combined science	High Grade 4	Middle Grade 5	High Grade 5

Required across both papers

*** Pupils who wish to be entered for higher but have not achieved at least a middle level 5 grade on a higher paper in Y11 Christmas Mock, will have to re-sit all relevant papers in week beginning 4 March 2024. All papers are sat after school in pupil's own time.**

Appointment booking for Parent's evening is accessed through the Pensby High 'School Cloud' website: <https://pensbyhigh.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

There are no passwords to login instead you enter your name and email address, your child's name, and their date of birth. You will need to book slots with the teachers you want to see, appointments are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Whilst we appreciate the difficulty, parents who are separated need to only book one appointment with each member of staff as appointment slots are very limited. Each appointment will last 5 minutes, parents are asked to leave 5 minutes between appointments to allow for travel to the various venues.

We have attached a map of where all subjects can be found on the evening to support parents in organising their appointments.

Please contact Heather Davies, Deputy Headteacher, should you wish to discuss this letter.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher