



Pensby High School

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

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Dear Parents and Carers

As you are aware, Year 11 parents evening is on Thursday 12th February (booking will be live from Thursday 29th January at 5pm). This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and to talk with their class teachers about areas they can continue to develop face to face in school. 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 23rd February, 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, and we are hopeful that we will have more guidance from the exam boards regarding exams this summer, 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 at the beginning of March 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 2025 GCSE Mathematics only 52.8% 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 2025 GCSE Mathematics only 27% 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.
- 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 (Taken in Dec 2025) 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 (Taken in Dec 2025) on Higher Tier Papers	Paper 2 Mock (Taken in February 2026) 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			

Please contact Assistant Headteacher, Mr Clement-Evans should you wish to discuss this letter.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher