

Sunday 16th August, 2020.



Penketh High School

Dear Parents and Carers,

I have no doubt that you have concerns regarding GCSE results for your son and daughter following the events of recent days regarding the A-Level results that were issued on Thursday. I'm sure you will be aware of press speculation that a similar algorithm used to calculate A-Level results for students is being applied to award GCSE grades. There has been some suggestion in the press today that the algorithm applied by Ofqual might account for a large proportion of GCSE grades awarded meaning that nationally a small number of grades awarded to pupils would be those identified by their teachers. This might mean that some of the grades a pupil receives is not inline with our understanding of their performance.

Unfortunately schools and colleges were not made aware of the extent of the dominance of an algorithm based system before results were issued to institutions on Wednesday. Similarly, schools have not had any advance information about the awarding of GCSE results this week. Reports in the press, at the moment, remain a key source of information until we receive results on Wednesday. These are embargoed meaning we can't provide information relating to these until Thursday morning when we release the grades to pupils.

I want to assure you that we will be working hard across Wednesday to develop a clear understanding of the grades and the impact on individual pupils. We will also be working in the coming days to support pupils where they have been adversely impacted by the process for awarding grades this year. The truth is, at this stage, we don't know what the impact will be and it's unlikely we'll know definitively until Wednesday once we are able to analyse the data.

I'm sure you're aware that there has been a suggestion that mock results can form the basis of appeals for pupils who have received results that don't reflect their expected performance. Ofqual released information relating to appeals on Saturday afternoon but by Sunday morning they had withdrawn this information and so, at present, there remains a lack of clarity as to how pupils can appeal. As soon as we have clarity on the procedures for appeals we will work in consultation with pupils and parents should we need to challenge the awarding of any particular grades.

I realise that this is an anxious time for pupils who have had not had the opportunity to sit their exams and are therefore not in control of the grades that they receive on Thursday. Our absolute priority is to ensure that we do all we can in the coming days and weeks to ensure that pupils not only get the grades that they deserve and those that reflect their efforts, but that they also secure college places to support their continued development.

All pupils have had their allotted time to collect results on Thursday sent to them by Mr Farrar. If you haven't received this or have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via email exams@penkethhigh.org and a member of the senior team will get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin
Principal.

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THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

Penketh High School, Heath Road, Penketh, Warrington, WA5 2BY

Tel: 01925 722298 Fax: 01925 723812 e-mail: principal@penketh.warrington.sch.uk Website: www.penkethhighschool.co.uk

Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH

