

24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to clarify the position regarding entry into the Sixth Form at Keswick School, particularly where a student does not meet the school's published general entry requirements for GCSE grades.

Keswick School sets clear academic entry criteria for admission into the Sixth Form. This is a minimum of a grade 4 and 5 (or vice versa) in English Language and Mathematics, plus at least three additional GCSEs at grade 4 or higher. These general GCSE entry requirements are designed to ensure that students are appropriately prepared for the academic demands of advanced level study and can succeed in their chosen courses.

Where a student does not meet the published general GCSE entry requirements, the school is entitled to refuse admission on that basis. In such circumstances, parents and students have the right to submit an appeal to an independent appeal panel.

It is important to understand the legal framework within which any such appeal would be considered. An independent appeal panel does not simply reconsider the application afresh or substitute its own academic judgment for that of the school. Instead, where the published entry requirements have not been met, the panel would need to be satisfied that the school's decision to refuse admission was unreasonable or irrational in the legal sense.

In practical terms, this is a high threshold. The panel would need to conclude that the decision was one that no reasonable school, properly directing itself in accordance with its published admissions arrangements, could have made. If the student has not achieved the required GCSE grades and the school has applied its admissions criteria consistently and correctly, it is unlikely that such a decision would be found to be irrational.

Where an independent appeals process is requested, students will not be able to start in the Sixth Form until the independent admission process has been completed. This may be 2-3 weeks into the autumn term. The process for arranging independent appeal panels for the Sixth Form will not begin until the start of September when school recommences for the autumn term.

We appreciate that GCSE results and post-16 progression are matters of great importance to students and families. We therefore strongly encourage all prospective Sixth Form applicants to ensure that they are aware of the published general GCSE entry requirements and to seek advice from their teachers at the earliest opportunity if they have any concerns about meeting them.

If you would like further clarification about the Sixth Form entry criteria or the independent appeals process, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

**Simon Jackson**  
Head teacher



Ofsted Report 2024



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