



Where every student is successful today and prepared for tomorrow
Aspire Believe Achieve

September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to wish you all a warm welcome back to the new school year. I hope you have all had a lovely summer. An especially warm welcome goes to our new Year 7 parents and to those families whose children have joined us in other year groups. I always enjoy seeing the students return to school and finding out what they have been up to in the summer holidays. It is lovely to see them refreshed, ready to engage with their learning and in smart uniform. It has been a great start to the new academic year and I am sure your children have come home tired after their first few days back, but I have been impressed with their positive attitude to learning.

I have spent a lot of my time in the first week going into lessons to see students and staff at work and I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing a wide range of activities taking place and students fully focused on their learning. Our drive this year is to raise the achievement of our students even more with a focus on challenge and stretch for all, high aspirations and high levels of engagement and participation in all aspects of school life. My theme when talking to students and staff at the start of the year has been for every member of our school community to be the best that they can be.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our students' successes in the external exams. The results days in August for both A level and GCSE were lovely occasions where we were able to celebrate with both students, parents and other family members. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our students on their achievements, which are the culmination of years of hard work and study.

As you may have seen in the press this year, the number of higher grades awarded at both A level and GCSE has been reduced to be in line with pre-Covid 2019 levels. However, we are delighted that we have seen our results improve despite the harsher grade boundaries.

At A level we maintained our strong track record of good results. Once again, we have seen an improvement in the average grade per entry; there was an increase in the number of students achieving grade A* and A, despite the number of these grades awarded going down nationally. The majority of Year 13 secured their first-choice places at university or on Higher Level Apprenticeships. I am very sorry to see this cohort of students leave: they have been a lovely group of young people who are a credit to the school and we are very proud of them. They will be a year group I will always remember as they were my first group of Year 7 students when I took over as Headteacher.

At GCSE, our results have improved. The percentage of students achieving a grade 4 or above in both Maths and English is 65%, which should be in line with national figures. The percentage achieving the Ebacc (Maths, English, Science, a Humanity and a Language) at grade 4+ is 30%, and at 5+ 19%; both should be above national figures. Both English and Maths saw improvements in their results. There were also significant improvements in results in Modern Foreign Languages and History. Our Progress measure should be in line with national, showing that our students have achieved the grades of which they are capable.

We are delighted our students have achieved these results especially in a year when there was so much uncertainty. My thanks go to staff and to parents and carers who support students during the exams.

New Staff

As always at the start of a new academic year there have been some changes of staff and I would like to welcome the following new members of staff to Caldew School:

Charlotte Bentley	Teacher of Geography
Karla Bowers	Teaching Assistant
Lisa Brady	Admin Assistant Marketing and Careers
Sarah Brown	Teacher of Maths
Dorothy Forrest	Assistant SENDCO and Teacher of Performing Arts
Helen Fraser	Teacher of Maths
Lisa Hollywood	Business Manager
Kyle McHattie	ICT Technician
Ben Murphy	Teacher of PE
Fiona Robson	Teaching Assistant
Danielle Sewell	Kitchen Assistant
Jessica Sanders	Teacher of History
Jessica Sanders (Yes, we have two!)	Teacher of DT
Alison Wright	Teacher of French

Heads of Year

Our Heads of Year for this academic year are:

Year 7	Miss J Atkinson
Year 8	Mrs L Fraser
Year 9	Mr McArdle
Year 10	Mrs C Wallace
Year 11	Miss Howson
Year 12/13	Mr Gaunt (Assistant Headteacher)

Safety at the Start and End of the School Day

Parking and access to the school is a continuing challenge. The road at the front of school gets very busy, especially at the end of the school day, and the safety of students is obviously our priority. To that end, I would like to remind you that:

- Students should not be picked up or dropped off in the Visitors' Car Park (next to Reception).
- Parents picking up students from the Sports Hall Car Park need to park in a designated parking space either by 3:00pm or wait until the buses have departed at 3:20pm.
- We do stop cars from leaving the Sports Hall Car Park until all the buses have left. To ensure students safety, no cars should be moving through the car park when students are walking through it to reach their buses.
- No cars should be parked in the bus bays along the front of the school at the end of the school day.
- Cars should not stop or park on the footpath opposite the school. It is dangerous for students to cross the road and it increases the volume of traffic.
- Parents should never park in the roadway leading to Nestlé. This is a private road and is extremely busy with lorries constantly needing access to the site.
- If parking is not available at school there is a car park a short walk away in Dalston village.

Applying for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants

At the end of last term, Cumbria County Council launched an online application for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants. This can be found via the Citizen's portal, at this link:

https://emsonline.cumbria.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fCitizenPortal_LIVE

Free school meals and clothing vouchers are available if parents/guardians are receiving one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- An income-related Employment and Support Allowance;

- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided parents/guardians are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) that as of April 2012 does not exceed £16,190. Note: From 1st May 2009 where recipients are entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after employment ceases, or after start to work less than 16 hours per week, your children are entitled to Free School Meals, this may be extended.
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- Universal Credit
- Children who receive Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive Free School Meals.
- Children who receive "education suitable for children who have not attained compulsory school age" will still need to satisfy the additional requirement of "receiving education both before and after the lunch period", before being eligible to receive free school meals.

Attendance

At Caldew School we believe that attending school regularly is an essential foundation for successful learning because it helps to prepare students for the world of work and adult life. Therefore, we expect every student to attend school and be punctual. Students arriving to school after 8:40am will complete a 10 minute detention and you will be notified by text.

Did you know, 90% attendance is 20 school days missed? This is 100 missed hours of learning.

If you need to discuss your child's attendance or if your child needs to be absent from school for any reason, you need to contact the school before 9:30am on each day of the absence. You can either phone to speak to Mrs Wallace (Education Attendance Officer) on 01228 710044 or send a text message to 07860002169. Thank you for supporting our aim of a school community with 100% attendance.

Holidays and Other Absences in Term Time

I would like to remind parents as usual at this time of the year of the following extract from the school's Attendance Policy:

Parents should not book family holidays during term time as they will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a parent returning on leave from active military service.

Parents may request other leave of absence, however, authorisation of this will be at the discretion of the school, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This means that in the majority of cases, requests will not be authorised unless there are clear immediate family reasons or educational benefits.

Penalty Notices may be issued by the Headteacher against parents who take unauthorised holidays or leave of absence in term time. Each situation will be considered on an individual basis.

If leave is granted, parents must appreciate it is their responsibility to ensure their child catches up with any missed work upon their return.

Contacting Staff

Communication with you as parents is the key to ensuring that together we can improve the outcomes for students. You can find the e-mail addresses on the dedicated staff page on the school website and they will normally respond to you within 24 hours. If you wish to speak to a member of staff, please contact the school's reception. As most staff teach the majority of the day, they may not be available to take a call. They will return calls as soon as is possible, although in some cases, that may not be until the following day.

I would encourage all parents to contact us as soon as you have any concerns or questions. Dealing with issues quickly means that they rarely become insurmountable. As always, if you have any concerns about how a matter has been dealt with please do contact myself, Mr Hammond or Mrs Atkinson directly and we will make every effort to address your concerns. Parents of students in the Sixth Form may want to contact Mr Gaunt (Head of Sixth Form) directly.

Caldew PTA

A group of parents has set up the Caldew PTA. The aims are to strengthen the partnership between parents and the school and to provide funds for "extras" that enrich and have an impact on our children's education.

You don't have to join the committee – we are also looking for raffle prizes, help at events, or offer your time up in other small ways. Further information will be sent out to parents but if you would like to get involved please contact: Cheryl.Eastburn@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

The PTA also run a very successful pre-loved uniform shop. Items range from £1-£5. There is a form on the Caldew School website to download or you can drop us an email with the items you require. We would also be delighted to receive uniform items especially blazers, jumpers, ties and PE kits. These can be dropped off at Caldew reception.

Social Media

The easiest way to keep up with all the news, events and activities that are taking place at our busy school is through our social media pages, Instagram, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter).

Governors Vacancies

Caldew School is fortunate to be supported by a dedicated and well qualified governing body. Governors all work voluntarily to ensure the school delivers the highest possible standards of education for our community. Further details about the work of our Governors can be found on the school website using the link below:

[Governors - Caldew School](#)

We do have vacancies on our Governing Body for:

- One Parent Governor – details and a nomination form for this role are attached to this letter.
- One vacancy for a Community Governor who is appointed by the Full Governing Body. Community Governors do not need to be parents and are appointed to ensure that we have the right set of skills to enable the Full Governing Body to carry out its roles. We are currently looking for people who have experience in legal services, health and safety and HR. If you are interested in this role please contact Sarah Connolly, Clerk to the Governors at Sarah.Connolly@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

Upcoming Events

Open Evening

Our annual open evening for prospective students and their parents/carers will take place on Thursday 21 September 2023 6:00-8:00pm.

Tutor Evenings

We have re-introduced face to face Tutor Evenings this year so you can meet your child's Form Tutor and discuss their individual academic targets and how they have started the year. The dates for these evenings are:

• Years 7, 8 and 9	Wednesday 11 October 4.30-7.00pm
• Years 10, 11, 12 and 13	Thursday 12 October 4.30-7.00pm

Yours faithfully



Ms Vicki Jackson
Headteacher
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