

Dear Parents and Carers

I am delighted to welcome back students, parents, carers and staff to the new school year. An especially warm welcome to our new Year 7 parents and to those families whose children have joined us in other year groups. It is always lovely to see our students return to school after the summer holiday ready to engage with their learning and in smart uniform, but it has been especially so this year after what has been a challenging time for everyone.

As you are aware, a number of changes have been put in place to the operation of the school to try to ensure that students, staff and people at home remain safe. Change is always difficult but students have been brilliant at adapting to these changes and I would like to thank them for their effort. Students have settled into the new routines well and most seemed pleased to be back. I would also like to thank you for your support over these first few days. I am very grateful to you for following the requests I made in my August letter. It has really helped that children have arrived at their designated times, knew where to go and the number of students who have brought packed lunches has been amazing. Thank you!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at the school who have also had to get used to the new routines. Our site team have done a wonderful job over the summer holiday getting the school ready for reopening. We are all pleased to be back. A teacher emailed me last week and I would like to share part of what they said "I've loved being back in front of our wonderful kids doing what I love". I couldn't put it better myself!

I am very proud of the way in which the whole school community has pulled together to make the reopening of Caldew go smoothly. Now the focus is on getting back to what we do best - teaching children and making sure they get a good education.

Many thanks for your continued support.

### 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 teachers to Caldew School:

Mr F Callow	Teacher of ICT
Mrs F Cruickshank	Special Needs Coordinator
Miss H Gillies	Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages
Mr M Marston	Teacher of History and Citizenship
Mrs E May	Teacher of Psychology
Miss A Pennington	Network manager
Miss J Waite	Teacher of Science
Mr M Worthington	Teacher of Maths

### Heads of Year

The pastoral care of each Year Group is overseen by a Head of Year. This year our Heads of Year are:

Year 7	Mrs C McGuiness
Year 8	Mr B McArdle
Year 9	Miss J Atkinson
Year 10	Miss H Howson
Year 11	Mr C Clarke
Year 12/13	Mr A James

### **Red Box Project**

Through the scheme now funded by the government, we continue to provide period products to any student who needs them. Students are able to access sanitary towels and tampons whenever they need them in school. They are available at student services and from the staff on duty outside every toilet. Students can help themselves to whatever they need for school and home.

### **Safety at the Start and End of the School Day**

Parking and access to the school is a continuing challenge and even more so at the moment, as we have more parents dropping off and picking up children. The road at the front of school gets very busy especially at the end of the school day and the safety of our students is obviously our priority. To that end, I would like to remind you that:

- Students should not be dropped off or picked up in the Visitors Car Park (next to Reception).
- Parents picking up students from the Sports Hall Car Park need to park in a designated space by 3:00pm or wait until the buses have departed at 3:20pm. Please be aware that there is limited parking in this car park.
- 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 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.

### **Students Cycling to School**

We encourage students to cycle to and from school, as this is a healthy and environmental way for them to travel. However, we want students to do this safely. The road outside school gets very busy, especially at the end of the school day and students sometimes ride out of the school gate without looking. As a result, students must walk their bikes off the school site. If your child rides their bike to school please can you talk to them about how to do this in a safe manner. We also strongly encourage students to wear cycle helmets. As we move into the darker mornings and evenings, please ensure students wear appropriate, bright/high visibility clothing and their bikes are fitted with lights.

### **Applying for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants**

At the end of last term, Cumbria County Council launched an online application process 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](https://emsonline.cumbria.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fCitizenPortal_LIVE)

The online service has a number of benefits:

- Parents/guardians are able to check eligibility without waiting for a phone call/email from the Service Centre
- Reduces the risk of duplicate applications being submitted for the same child
- Reduces the risk of application forms and supporting documentation getting lost in the post
- Provides the Service Centre with an audit trail of applications
- Enables the Service Centre to issue vouchers in a more timely manner; a postal application takes twice as long to process as an online application

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.

### **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 then 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 contact myself, Mr Hammond or Mrs Atkinson (Deputy Headteachers) directly and we will make every effort to address your concerns. My personal school email is included at the foot of this letter and I welcome any communication from parents.

We are trying to minimise the number of visitors to school due to the pandemic so would request that you do not come in to school in the hope of meeting a member of staff without an appointment. Please contact us by telephone or email. Thank you for your understanding with this.

### **Parent Governor Vacancy**

The Governing Body of Caldew School has a vacancy for a Parent Governor. If you are interested in becoming a Parent Governor please contact the Clerk to the Governing Body ([sarah.connolly@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:sarah.connolly@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk)) for further information and a nomination form. The deadline for returning the nomination form is 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### **Caldew Friends and Family Association**

A group of parents have set up the Caldew Friends and Family Association. 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: [Caldewfriends@Caldew.cumbria.Sch.uk](mailto:Caldewfriends@Caldew.cumbria.Sch.uk) or contact Cheryl Eastburn on (01228) 710044.

### **Social Media**

You can find out all about the day to day running of the school and the many activities that take place at Caldew on our Facebook page (@CaldewSchool) and Twitter (@Caldew\_School) as well as the Headteacher bulletin and website ([www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk))

The social media feed is a great way to not only keep up with events in school but also posts regarding Careers Information Advice and Guidance, open events at colleges and universities, apprenticeship opportunities and community posts.

### **Virtual Open Evening for Year 6 Students**

It’s always a pleasure to welcome prospective students and parents to our school each September for our Open Evening. Unfortunately, this year we are going to have to do things a bit differently. We know that there is no substitute for seeing the school for yourself, chatting to our students and staff and feeling the atmosphere in the corridors and classrooms. However, we still want to do all we can to help parents find out what our school is like. With this in mind, we are holding a Virtual Open Evening on Monday 21 September at 6pm.

If you know a parent of a Year 6 student that would like a copy of our new prospectus and sign up for the Virtual Open Evening, please ask them to visit our website [www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.caldew.cumbria.sch.uk) where they can view a short introductory film and sign up for the event.

We will be arranging tours of the school as soon as we can.

Yours faithfully

Ms Vicki Jackson  
Headteacher

[Vicki.jackson@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:Vicki.jackson@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk)