



*Where every student is successful today and prepared for tomorrow*

*Aspire Believe Achieve*

September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to wish you all a warm welcome back to the new school year and I hope you have all had a lovely summer. An especially warm welcome goes to our new Year 7 families and to those 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 always 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 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 focus at the start of this year is to ensure that every students behaviour and attitude is the best that it can possibly be. At Caldew School we have three rights:

- **Students have the right to learn**
- **Teachers have the right to teach**
- **Everybody has the right to be safe.**

Our expectations, policies and systems are designed to ensure that these rights are in place so that every one of our students can be successful. This has included redesigning our rewards and consequences systems and a copy of these can be found at the back of this letter. We have improved the systems for notifying you if your child receives an achievement log or a consequences log and you will now receive a notification via the SIMS Parent app. We feel that we have not celebrated the vast majority of our students who get things right, day after day, and the new rewards system will enable them to be recognised. Students and staff have been fully briefed on these new systems and our expectations, and I have been really impressed at how students have made a real effort to follow them.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our students' successes in last year's 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 and 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.

At A level we maintained our track record of good results. The majority of Year 13 secured their first-choice places at university and on higher level apprenticeships. Our students have gone on to study a wide range of subjects at universities all over the country, including the top Russell Group universities. They have gone to study subjects such as Maths, Engineering, Biological Sciences, Policing and Forensics, Psychology and Physics at universities like Oxford, Durham, Manchester, Lancaster and Liverpool. I am very sorry to see this cohort of students leave: they have been a lovely group of young people who are credit to the school and we are very proud of them.

We are very pleased with our results at GCSE. Our progress measure should be in line with national, showing that our students have achieved the grades they are capable of. The percentage of students achieving a grade 4 or above in both Maths and English is in line with targets. The percentage achieving the Ebacc (Maths, English, Science, a Humanity and a Language) at grade 4+ and at 5+ should be in line with national figures. We saw an improvement in the achievement of high prior attaining student and those students with Special Educational Needs also did well. I am also delighted to see so many students returning to Caldew to continue with their education in the Sixth Form alongside 19 students who have joined us from other schools.

My thanks go to staff and to parents and carers who supported 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:

Adriana Acquaviva	Cover Supervisor
Leanne Blair	Teaching Assistant
Helen Clark-Hewitt	Teacher of PE and Science
Ben Ettridge	Teacher of Maths and Business Studies
Steve Garbett	Teacher of English
Charlotte Hill	Teacher of Chemistry
Sophie Forster	Teaching Assistant
Paula Jackson	Teacher of Business Studies
Megan Lewis	Teacher of Science
Iona Morrin	Teacher of PE
Daniel Potter	Teacher of Maths
Sarah Sims	Teacher of Psychology
Holly Stephenson	Teacher of Geography
Patrick Ugbugba	ICT Technician
Amanda Watters	Catering manager
Alison Willetts	Teacher of Science

### **Heads of Year**

Our Heads of Year for this academic year are:

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

### **Year 11**

We are pleased to welcome back our Year 11 students for the final year of their GCSE qualifications and are proud to see how they are approaching the year with dedication and focus. It will be a busy year for them, with mock exams in November, Non-Exam Assessment being completed and important exam preparation taking place. It is a year that will go incredibly quickly and our message to students is clear: there is time to make a difference to results, but there is no time to waste.

One of the biggest factors in a student's success is their attendance: students with good attendance do better in their exams. Every day missed is five hours lost; every day attended is five hours of learning.

Over the coming weeks, we will support students' revision. It is never too early to start, allowing time to cover content repeatedly and confidently. Our tutor programme will focus on revision, sharing the information and strategies which are also available on Firefly, including revision techniques, advice for parents and carers (<https://caldew.fireflycloud.net/year-11-revision>) and individual subject checklists for exam content in all courses (<https://caldew.fireflycloud.net/year-11-revision/year-11-subject-checklists>).

We are looking forward to working with students during an exciting year: they will work hard towards the qualifications and make important choices about the next steps of their lives. We will do whatever we can to support them and would encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Sixth Form**

Caldew Sixth Form continues to be an intrinsic part of the wider school. Our priorities this year are Attendance, Success and Community. Excellent attendance is vital in the Sixth Form. How can students expect to learn to the best of their ability if they are not here to engage with teaching?

We want all students to be successful today and prepared for tomorrow. This is why we will be focusing on the five components of Success (Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice and Attitude) in our Personal Development and registration programmes this year. Year 12 will initially be focusing on their vision in the Autumn term and Year 13 will be focusing on applying for their next step, whether that be through UCAS, on to an apprenticeship or towards the workplace.

Each Sixth Former will also be looking to get involved in the wider life of the school by contributing to clubs and activities, supporting younger years with their learning or shaping the Sixth Form for future cohorts. It's going to be a productive year for the Sixth Form within the Caldew community.

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

The road into Dalston from Carlisle is still closed. We will update you about when this will be reopened as soon as we know. Parking and access to the school is a continuing challenge and this will get worse once the road is reopened. 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 either need to park in a designated parking space 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**

Online applications for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants can be made via the Cumberland Citizen's portal, at this link: [https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/en](https://ems.cumberland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en)

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit - Provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit. Also, your annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Universal Credit - if your household income is less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Families with no recourse to public funds (anyone who is subject to immigration controls)

Families who may be eligible include (but are not limited to):

- Zambrano carers
- Have the right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the ECHR
- Receiving support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 AND are subject to a NRPF condition
- Chen carers
- Families holding a BNO passport
- Spousal visa holders
- Work visa holders
- Student visa holders
- Those with no immigration status

Income of families applying for free school meals

To be eligible for free school meals, your family's annual household income must be no higher than:

- £22,700 for families outside of London with one child
- £26,300 for families outside of London with two or more children

This includes any wider income or support you may be getting and any earnings from employment.

You must also have less than £16,000 in savings, including any shares, investments and bank accounts, but not including your home.

Apply for free school meals and school clothing vouchers

If you already get free school meals and clothing grants you do not need to apply for each school year.

If you apply online you will receive an immediate response telling you if you are eligible for the vouchers. You do not need to re-apply every year.

If your details or circumstance change

It is important that you tell the free school meal team of any change in circumstances including:

- change of personal details, for example name or address
- if you stop being the primary carer of the child(ren) you are claiming for

If you have another child who is starting school

Even if you are already getting free school meals and school clothing vouchers for your other children, you need to apply for each child starting school for the first time.

You will need to submit a new application for that child only, regardless of whether older siblings are in get free school meals.

School meal vouchers in the school holidays

If you already applied and qualify for free school meals, you will automatically receive a voucher during the school holidays. Your school will buy the vouchers on your behalf.

If you have any questions about Free School Meals or Clothing Grants, please contact 0300 373 3730 or [FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk)

**Attendance**

At Caldew School we understand that good attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life-chances. Every second in school counts and missing school by being late or taking days off, creates learning gaps. We know this from our GCSE results each year, when we compare GCSE grades with attendance, those who attend school regularly achieve better. Being in school also gives young people structure and enables them to build their friendships and social skills. The Department for Education updated its policies for all Secondary State Schools which came into effect at the end of August.

The government are taking a much tougher stance on unauthorised absence, so that a period of 5 days unauthorised absence (not necessarily in a single week) is likely to lead to a fixed penalty fine. This is being supported by Cumberland Council who have employed a new team of access and

inclusion officers who will work with schools, families and other partner agencies to improve school attendance across our area.

We want every student's attendance to be good or better. This means 96%+. It is important to us that students and parents feel supported and by working together with families, we are sure we can help to overcome the barriers which can prevent students coming into school. Parents set the tone when it comes to valuing education and prioritising school. Specific strategies include:

- Establishing routines – regular bedtimes, morning routines reinforces organisations and discipline. (Teenagers need 8-10 hours per night according to research). Routines can make attending school seamless rather than a daily battle.
- Managing health issues – making medical appointments, outside of school time if possible, managing medication, communicating with pastoral staff over medical concerns.
- Encouraging resilience - As we head into the autumn we will all suffer the usual coughs, colds and viruses and we always feel worse in the morning. Getting up, getting dressed, a hot drink and a dose of paracetamol is often enough to get us into school. If a student is not well enough to be in school, we will contact home.
- Seeking help when needed – if you are struggling to get your child to school please contact their form tutor, pastoral manager, head of year or the attendance officer to discuss your concerns.

Thank you for your support in ensuring that students attend school everyday. Full information on the updated government policy, released by the Department for Education can be found here

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)  
([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

Advice on assessing whether or not your child is fit for school can be found here:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/child-too-ill-for-school/)

### **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.*

### **Flu Vaccinations**

Students in Years 7-11 are entitled to nasal flu vaccinations. The date set for these vaccinations is 14<sup>th</sup> November. Parents and carers will need to give consent for their children to have this vaccination and this will now be done online and not via forms given out in school. We will put further details on the website and email you once we have them.

### **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 do contact myself, Mr Hammond or Mrs

Atkinson directly and we will make every effort to address your concerns. In addition, 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: [Lisa.Brady@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:Lisa.Brady@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk)

The PTA also runs 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 on Instagram and Facebook.

### **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 detail 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 three Parent Governors – details and a nomination form for this role are attached to this letter.

If you are interested in this role and would like further information please contact Sarah Connolly, Clerk to the Governors at [Sarah.Connolly@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto: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 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 6:00 – 8:00pm.

#### **Tutor Evenings**

Our Tutor Evenings will take place remotely this year, using SchoolCloud, so you can meet your child’s Form Tutor, discuss their individual academic targets and how they have started the year. This will take place for all year groups on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October from 4.15pm until 6.45pm.

Yours faithfully

Ms Vicki Jackson  
Headteacher

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