



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

September 2025

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.

We always look forward to seeing our students return to school after the summer and finding out what they have been up to in the holidays. It has been a good start to the new academic year, and I have been impressed with their positive attitude to learning in the first few days of the academic year. I have spent a lot my time 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.

The summer holidays in school were very busy with the building work taking place on our new Sixth Form Centre. This area of the school has been transformed through a £1 million refurbishment into a state-of-the-art learning centre for our Sixth Form students now and in the future. There is a new Learning Hub with facilities that will allow our students to develop their independent learning skills and gives them an excellent learning environment in which to work. There is also a new Student Hub where they can socialise. Classrooms have been refurbished and project rooms created. This new Sixth Form Centre was made possible due to the donation from the Story Group of companies, Story Homes, Story Contracting and Story Plant. We are delighted with our new centre it is truly amazing, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for making this happen. Photographs of the new Sixth Form Centre can be found on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

The new Sixth Form Centre is part of the project to further raise the achievement and aspirations of the young people who attend Caldew School both now and in the future. The donation from the Story group of companies has enabled us to develop ambitious plans to provide the highest quality of teaching, with opportunities and experiences outside the classroom that raise the aspiration of our students, so they have the confidence to compete at higher education, in apprenticeships and in the workplace, with young people from across the country. This includes employing additional teaching staff, investing in training to ensure teaching and learning is of the highest quality, developing more extra-curricular opportunities for all students, an elite sports coaching programme and a programme to stretch and challenge the Most Able students. You can find our improved extra-curricular offer attached to this newsletter. We will keep you updated on how this money is being used

Last year we had a focus with students and staff in ensuring that behaviour was good so that students could learn. We saw a significant improvement in behaviour and we are determined that this will continue this year to ensure that every student's 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 everyone of our students can be successful. Our rewards and consequences systems can be found attached to this letter. If your child receives an achievement log or a consequences log and you will receive a notification.

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 vast 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 Law, Medicine, Zoology, Maths, Engineering, Biological Sciences, Psychology, Physics and Nursing at Universities including Oxford, 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. The percentage of students achieving a grade 4 or above in both Maths and English has increased and is in line with national figures. The percentage achieving the Ebacc (Maths, English, Science, a Humanity and a Language) at grade 4+ and at 5+ has also improved and will be at least if not above 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:

Gavin Parker-Smith	Assistant Headteacher
Elliot Percival	DT Teacher
Lucy Baker	Lead Practitioner English
Sarah Brackley	Lead Practitioner Maths
Claire Dunlop	Finance Assistant
Alice Graham	Academic Advisor
Kerry Harding	Senior Teaching Assistant
Cheryl MacKay	Senior Teaching Assistant
Mia Norman	Teaching Assistant
Pauline Steenbergen	Pastoral Manager
Will Thomas	Lead Practitioner Science
Mikey Williamson	PE Teacher
Lauren Woodrow	Pastoral Manager

Pastoral Teams

Our Pastoral Teams for this academic year are:

Year 7	Miss J Atkinson (Head of Year) and Mr C Suleman (Pastoral Manager)
Year 8	Mrs L Fraser (Head of Year) and Mrs L Graham/Ms S Taylor (Pastoral Manager)
Year 9	Miss H Hewitt (Head of Year) and Ms L Woodrow (Pastoral Manager)
Year 10	Mrs E Brownlee (Head of Year) and Ms Pauline Steenbergen
Year 11	Mr B McArdle (Head of Year) and Mrs S Taylor (Pastoral Manager)
Year 12/13	Mr Gaunt (Head of Sixth form) and Mr A James (Assistant Head of Sixth form)

Anti-Bullying

As a school, we are launching a renewed **anti-bullying message** to reinforce our commitment to ensuring every student feels safe, supported, and respected.

During the first week of term, all year groups have taken part in assemblies focused on this important theme, with clear guidance on how students can report concerns and how they can support each other.

While our recent **student survey tells us that bullying is rare at Caldew**, we know there is always more we can do. Our anti-bullying work is about taking the small steps that make a big difference to every child's experience of school.

We will be sharing further details with you in the coming weeks about the wider work we are doing, and how you can support this message at home.

Together, we can continue to build a school culture where kindness, respect, and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do

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 revamped Personal Development and form time programmes this year. Tutors will be focusing on goal setting and progress in tutor time and our new Personal Development programme aims to address the ever-changing needs of the young people we teach. Year 12 will initially be focusing on their vision in the Autumn term and Year 13 will be focusing on achieving their future professional goals. Year 13 students are also busy applying for their next steps, 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 Caldeu community.

Safety at the Start and End of the School Day

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 road 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 available in the car park a short walk away in Dalston village. It is much safer for our children if parents pick up in the 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

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

Attendance

At Caldew School, we know that good attendance is essential for every student's success—both in the classroom and beyond. Being in school every day supports not only academic achievement, but also students' well-being, confidence, and life chances. Every lesson matters and missing time through lateness or absence creates gaps in learning that can be hard to close.

We see this every year in our GCSE results. Students who attend school regularly achieve better grades. Research from the Department for Education (March 2025) shows the clear impact:

- Pupils attending nearly every day in Year 11 (95–100% attendance) were almost twice as likely to achieve a Grade 5 in English and Maths compared to those attending 90–95%.
- Those who attended 95–100% were three times more likely to succeed than pupils who were persistently absent (85–90%).
- Missing just 10 days of school in Year 11 can reduce the likelihood of achieving a Grade 5 in English and Maths by around 50%.

But attendance is about much more than exam results. Regular attendance provides structure, helps students build friendships, and develops the social skills they will carry into adult life. This is why attendance remains a high priority for both the government and for us at Caldew School. New national measures mean that just 5 days of unauthorised absence (not necessarily in the same week) is likely to result in a fixed penalty fine issued by Cumberland Council.

Our aim is for every student to achieve **good attendance—96% or above**. We know that parents play a vital role in setting routines and showing children that education is a priority. Some practical ways you can support your child include:

- **Establishing routines:** A regular bedtime and morning routine makes school attendance much smoother. (Teenagers need 8–10 hours of sleep each night.)
- **Managing health issues:** Whenever possible, book medical appointments outside school hours. If your child has an ongoing medical need, please keep us informed.
- **Encouraging resilience:** As we move into autumn, colds and minor illnesses are common. Often, getting up, dressed, and into school is the best way forward. If a student is truly unwell, we will always contact you.
- **Seeking help when needed:** If you are finding it difficult to get your child to school, please reach out to their Form Tutor, Pastoral Manager, Head of Year, or our Attendance Officer. We are here to help.

Thank you for working with us to make sure every student attends school every day. By working together, we can give your child the very best chance of success.

For more information on the government's attendance guidance, please visit: *Working together to improve school attendance* (publishing.service.gov.uk)

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 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 Wednesday 5th November. Parents and carers need to give consent for their children to have this. Forms are no longer given out in school and we will post further information on the website and email you with details of how to give your consent online.

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, Mrs C Atkinson or Miss Nordon 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

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 and Facebook.

Governors Vacancy

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:

[Governing Body - Caldew School](#)

We have a vacancy on our Governing Body for a Parent Governor – 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

Upcoming Events

Open Evening

Our annual open evening for prospective students and their parents/carers will take place on Thursday 18th September from 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 and discuss their individual academic targets and how they have started the year. This will take place for all year groups on Thursday 16th October from 4.15pm until 6.45pm.

Parents Evenings

Year 7	Wednesday 4 th March
Year 8	Wednesday 6 th May
Year 9	Thursday 12 th February
Year 10	Wednesday 17 th June
Year 11	Thursday 29 th January
Sixth Form	Thursday 27 th November

Yours faithfully

Ms Vicki Jackson
Headteacher
Vicki.jackson@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk

Extra-curricular Activities Autumn 2025

Lunchtime:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Badminton (Yr 7-11)	Card Games (Yr 7-11)	Art Club (Yr 7)	Netball (Yr 7-11) Tactical	Badminton (Yr7-11)
Chess Club (Yr7-13)	Drama (Yr7-9)	Board Games (Yr 7-11)	Creative Writing (Yr7-13)	Body Pump (Yr 9-13)
CREST (Yr7-9)	Futsal Boys (Yr 7-11)	Book Club (Yr 7-11)	Strength & Con (Yr 7-8 Boys- Sports Teams)	Choir (All) (Yr7-13)
Equine Club (Yr7-9)	Hockey (Yr7-11) Tactical	Choir (Yr 10-13) (Senior)	Manga (Yr7-11) (Break)	Homework (Yr7-11)
Strength & Con (Yr 9-13 Girls- Sports Teams)	Sparx Maths (Yr7-11)	Computer & Photography (Yr7-9)	Newspaper (Yr7-11)	Podcast Club (Yr7-11)
Choir (Junior) (Yr7-9)	Strength & Con (Yr 9-13 Boys- Sports Teams)	Futsal Girls (Yr 7-11)	Sparx Maths (Yr7-11)	Current Affairs (Yr7-11)
Spanish (Yr7- 11) Scrabble	Wind Band (Yr 7-11)	Homework (Yr 7-11)	Rugby (Yr7-11) Tactical	Computer & Photography (Yr7-9)
		Strength & Con (Yr 9-13 Boys- Sports Teams)		

After School:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Gymnastics (Yr7-10)	Football Boys (Yr 9-10)	Hockey (Yr 9-11)	Netball (Yr 9-11)	
Football Boys (Yr 7-8)	Hockey (Yr 7-8)	Netball (Yr 7-8)	Football Girls (Yr7-11)	
	Rock Club (Yr 9-11)	Let's Debate! (Yr 12-13)		
	Rugby (Yr 7-9)			