



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

*Aspire Believe Achieve*

September 2026

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 am delighted that the school is full in all year groups except the Sixth Form and is actually oversubscribed now in Years 7, 8 and 9.

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. I have spent a lot of 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 once again busy with site improvements. We have refurbished two Maths classrooms, improved our CCTV in some areas and our PE changing rooms have been refurbished and improved as has the PE reception area. This was made possible due to the additional funding we receive from the Story Group of Companies. These will make an immediate difference to students' learning environment and day-to-day experience of school. The standout project this year has been the installation of solar panels across the school roof. This is a fantastic step forward for Caldew: it will significantly reduce our carbon footprint and cut our energy costs, improving our sustainability and meaning more of our budget can be invested directly in our students' education rather than in energy bills.

Our Sixth Form Centre, which opened last year, remains 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. We will keep you updated on our plans for 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 consequence log you will receive a text notification.

I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate our students that took their GCSE and A level exams last year. 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. 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 including Physics, Biosciences, Biomedical Sciences, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Midwifery, Psychology, Anatomy and Human Biology, Law and Business Management, at Universities including Sheffield, Durham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Northumbria, Leeds and Lancaster. 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.

There were some real strengths to celebrate in our GCSE results: our students with Special Educational Needs did well and achieved good outcomes, our students' who are disadvantaged results were in line with national in many areas, and we saw particularly strong results including in Physics, Biology, Art, Photography, Music, Business Studies, Child Development, Health & Social Care and Computing. I am also delighted to see so many students returning to Caldew to continue with their education in the Sixth Form alongside a number of 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:

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mr Jason Bignell    | Head of Year 8 and Teacher of Science |
| Mrs Rebecca James   | Teacher of Geography                  |
| Miss Tayla Denton   | Teacher of Geography                  |
| Mr Iain Muggeridge  | Teacher of Maths                      |
| Mrs Claire Bowen    | Cover Supervisor                      |
| Mr Declan McCaughey | Teacher of Drama/English              |
| Mrs Wendy Bolton    | Pastoral Manager Year 10              |
| Mrs Helen Teasdale  | Pastoral Manager Year 7               |
| Mrs Jane Smillie    | Teaching Assistant                    |
| Mr Jordan Hilton    | Senior Teaching Assistant             |

## Pastoral Teams

Our Pastoral Teams for this academic year are:

|            |                                                                             |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Year 7     | Miss J Atkinson (Head of Year) and Mrs H Teasdale (Pastoral Manager)        |
| Year 8     | Mr J Bignell (Head of Year) and Mrs S Taylor (Pastoral Manager)             |
| Year 9     | Mrs L Fraser (Head of Year) and Mrs L Graham/Ms S Taylor (Pastoral Manager) |
| Year 10    | Mrs H Clark-Hewitt (Head of Year) and Mrs W Bolton (Pastoral Manager)       |
| Year 11    | Ms E Brownlee (Head of Year) and Mr M Maguire (Pastoral Manager)            |
| Year 12/13 | Mr Gaunt (Head of Sixth form)                                               |

## Parent Survey Feedback

Thank you to everyone who completed our parent survey at the end of last school year. We had 226 responses, and your feedback helps us understand what is working well and where we need to focus our efforts. Here is a summary of what you told us.

### You said - what went well:

- 90% of parents would recommend Caldew School to another parent
- 93% of parents agree that their child feels safe at school
- 88% of parents agree that their child is happy at school
- 86% of parents agree that the school makes sure students are well behaved
- 87% of parents agree that their child does well at this school
- 90% of parents agree there is a good range of subjects available
- 87% agree there is a good range of clubs and activities on offer

### You said - even better if:

- Only 66% of parents agreed that the school makes them aware of what their child will learn during the year – we will be publishing a newsletter about our curriculum during the year and all the information about what students are taught is already on our web site
- Only 68% of parents said the school supports their child's wider personal development - we want to do more to make this work visible to parents
- While 87% of parents agreed a good range of clubs and activities is offered, only 65% of children take part in them - we would like to see more students getting involved

Thank you again for your honesty and engagement with the survey. We will keep you updated on the actions we are taking in response to your feedback throughout the year.

## Anti-Bullying

At Caldew School, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels safe, supported and respected.

Feedback from our recent student surveys tells us that bullying is **rare at Caldew**. Students report that when bullying does occur, it is dealt with **promptly and effectively** by school staff. While this is encouraging, we remain committed to continually improving our work in this area and ensuring that all students feel confident to speak up if they have concerns.

This year, we are renewing our focus on our anti-bullying message and helping students understand the difference between **unkind behaviour, hurtful behaviour and bullying**. By developing a shared understanding of these behaviours, we can ensure concerns are identified and addressed appropriately.

If a student or parent has any concerns about bullying, we encourage them to contact:

- Their child's **Form Tutor**
- The relevant **Pastoral Manager**
- The relevant **Head of Year**
- Email our dedicated anti-bullying inbox: [stopbullying@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:stopbullying@caldew.cumbria.sch.uk)

We take all reported concerns seriously and will always investigate and provide support where needed. Together, we can continue to build a school culture where kindness, respect and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do, and where every student has the right to feel safe.

### **Attendance: A Strong Start to the Year**

Thank you for your support in helping students make such a positive start to the new academic year. We are delighted that attendance during the first week of term was **5% higher than the first week of last year**, demonstrating the commitment of our students and families to making every day count. We were also pleased to achieve **100% attendance on one day in Year 7 and one day in Year 12**, an excellent achievement.

As outlined in our Attendance Strategy launched in August, our message is simple: **Every Day Matters**. Regular attendance is key to academic success, wellbeing and positive relationships, and we are committed to working closely with families to support excellent attendance.

This year, we will continue to:

- Identify attendance concerns early
- Provide support where barriers arise
- Celebrate excellent and improving attendance
- Promote positive attendance habits across the school

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](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

### **Teaching & Learning**

This year, our Teaching & Learning strategy focuses on helping every student think deeply, communicate effectively and become an expert in each subject.

A key part of this is our 3-Part Lesson. Students will increasingly recognise three stages in their lessons:

- Connect & Prepare – recalling previous learning, retrieving knowledge from memory and preparing for new learning.
- Teach & Think – developing new understanding through clear explanations, modelling, questioning and challenging thinking.
- Reflect & Review – applying learning, explaining thinking, addressing misconceptions and identifying what students need to learn next.

Alongside this, our “Think Like an Expert” focus means that students will learn to think, reason and communicate in the ways that experts do in different subjects – whether that is explaining evidence in History, reasoning mathematically or using precise vocabulary in Science.

We look forward to seeing our students engaged in their lessons and making great progress throughout the year.

### **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.*

A reminder of term dates for 2026-27:

Autumn Half-term      Monday 26<sup>th</sup> – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October  
End of Term:              Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December

First Day of Term:      Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January  
Spring Half-term:      Monday 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February  
End of Term:              Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March

First Day of Term:      Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April  
Summer Half-term:    Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June  
End of Term:              Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July

## **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 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 students if parents pick them up in the village.

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

### Eligibility changes from the 2026 to 2027 school year

From the start of the 2026 - 2027 school year, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced new eligibility rules for free school meals. Under the new rules, children in households receiving one or more elements of Universal Credit are entitled to free school meals.

A new national application system has been introduced to support this change. Cumberland Council can now accept applications under the new eligibility rules.

### Who can get free school meals

Free school meals are available to statutory school-aged children who attend full-time education. This does not include children in private nurseries or further education colleges.

### Eligibility based on benefits you receive

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you receive:

- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

### Eligibility based on benefits your child receives

Some children can get free school meals if certain benefits are paid directly to them rather than to a parent or guardian. Any child receiving Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) in their own right is entitled to free school meals.

### Families with no recourse to public funds

If you are subject to immigration control, you may not have access to benefits. Some families with no recourse to public funds may still be eligible for free school meals. Contact Cumberland Council directly for further information:

Email: [FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk)

### Apply for free school meals and clothing grants

You can apply for free school meals and school clothing grants in one application. Where possible, apply online using the Citizen Portal. You will need to register before you can apply. Here is the link to apply online: [Apply for free school meals and school clothing grants](#)

If you cannot apply online, contact the council directly to request a paper application form:  
Email: [FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk) Telephone: 0300 373 3730

### After you apply

If you apply online, you will receive an immediate response telling you whether you are eligible. Once your application has been approved, the council will check your eligibility regularly. Your child will continue to receive free school meals unless changes to your circumstances mean you are no longer eligible. You must tell the council if anything changes that could affect your claim. This includes:

- a change to your personal details, such as your name or address
- if you are no longer the primary carer of the child or children you are claiming for

Email: [FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:FSM.ClothingGrants@cumberland.gov.uk) Telephone: 0300 373 3730

### If your child changes school

You do not need to apply again if your child changes school. Make sure the school admissions team is aware of the change.

### School meal vouchers in the school holidays

If you qualify for free school meals, you will automatically receive a voucher during the school holidays. School will arrange the vouchers on your behalf.

## **Sixth Form – A Positive Start to the Year**

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our Sixth Form students and their families, particularly those joining us in Year 12. It has been wonderful to see students settling into Sixth Form life and making such a positive start to the new academic year. Caldew Sixth Form is an integral part of our wider school community and, this year, our work will be centred around three key priorities: Attendance, Success and Community.

### Attendance

Excellent attendance and punctuality are essential if students are to achieve their potential. Sixth Form brings greater independence, but with this comes greater responsibility. Students are expected to attend all lessons and tutor sessions punctually, make purposeful use of their study time and complete the independent study set by their subject teachers each week. We ask parents and carers to support us in maintaining these high expectations, alongside our expectations around dress, behaviour and the appropriate use of mobile phones and earphones.

### Success

We want every student to be successful today and prepared for tomorrow. Throughout our Personal Development and tutor programmes, we will help students develop the skills, habits and attitudes that underpin success. Year 12 will begin by considering their vision and aspirations for the future, while Year 13 will have a strong focus on preparing for their next steps, whether through university and UCAS, an apprenticeship or employment.

### Community

Being a Sixth Former at Caldew is about more than academic study. We want our students to be positive role models and active members of the wider school community. Students have opportunities to contribute to clubs and activities, support younger students, take on leadership roles and help shape the Sixth Form for future cohorts.

Our fantastic Sixth Form facilities provide dedicated spaces for both independent study and social time, and we want students to make the very best use of them. Alongside their academic studies, students will benefit from a wide programme of enrichment, careers and personal development opportunities designed to prepare them for life beyond Caldew.

We are looking forward to a productive and successful year and to working closely with students and families to ensure that every Sixth Former is supported, challenged and encouraged to achieve their very best.

### **Flu Vaccinations**

Students in Years 7-11 are entitled to the nasal flu vaccination. The nurses will be in school on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November to administer these. Parents and carers will need to give consent for their children to have this vaccination and this is now done online, 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 email 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 P Hammond, Mrs C Atkinson or Miss Y 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 M Gaunt (Head of Sixth Form) directly.

### **School Uniform Shop**

We 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.

### **Governor 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:

[Governing Body - Caldew School](#)

We have two vacancies on our Governing Body for 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 17<sup>th</sup> September from 6:00 – 8:30pm.

#### 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 Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October from 4:15 – 6:45pm

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ms Vicki Jackson  
Headteacher

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



## Caldew School Rewards

At Caldew School we understand the importance of rewarding and celebrating students.



**Daily**

### **Classroom Achievement Log (1 Point)**

In every lesson you can earn an achievement log. This could be for having a good attitude to learning, quality work, excellent effort or improved progress.

Achievement points will be logged on Sims by your teacher.

**Weekly**

### **100% Weekly Attendance (1 Point)**

### **HoY Star of the Week (5 Points)**

Students with the highest number of achievement points during the week will achieve this reward.

### **Caldew Community Achievement Logs (2 Points)**

Extra curricular participation, good attitude and behaviour on school trips.

Achievement points will be logged on Sims.

A certificate will be given out in assembly and a text will be sent home.

Achievement points will be logged on Sims – please make sure you register for the different activities!

**5 Weekly**

### **5 Week Attendance Streak (5 Points)**

Achievement points will be logged on Sims.

**Half Termly**

### **Achievement Certificates**

These are based on achievement points accrued

Bronze - 75 Silver - 150 Gold - 300 Platinum - 600 1200+ Club.

### **Department Star of the Half Term - 1 Per Year Group (5 Points)**

Awarded for the highest number of achievements in a particular subject.

### **Headteacher Star of the Half Term - 1 Per Year Group (5 Points)**

Nominated by the Head of Year.

A certificate will be given out in assembly and a text will be sent home.

A certificate will be given out by the Head of Department and a text will be sent home.

Breakfast with the Headteacher and a letter will be sent home.

**Termly**

### **100% Termly Attendance (10 Points)**

### **Rewards Event**

The top 50 students in each year group are invited.

Achievement points will be logged on Sims.

There are different events which can take place in and out of school.

**Yearly**

### **Caldew Annual Awards Ceremony**

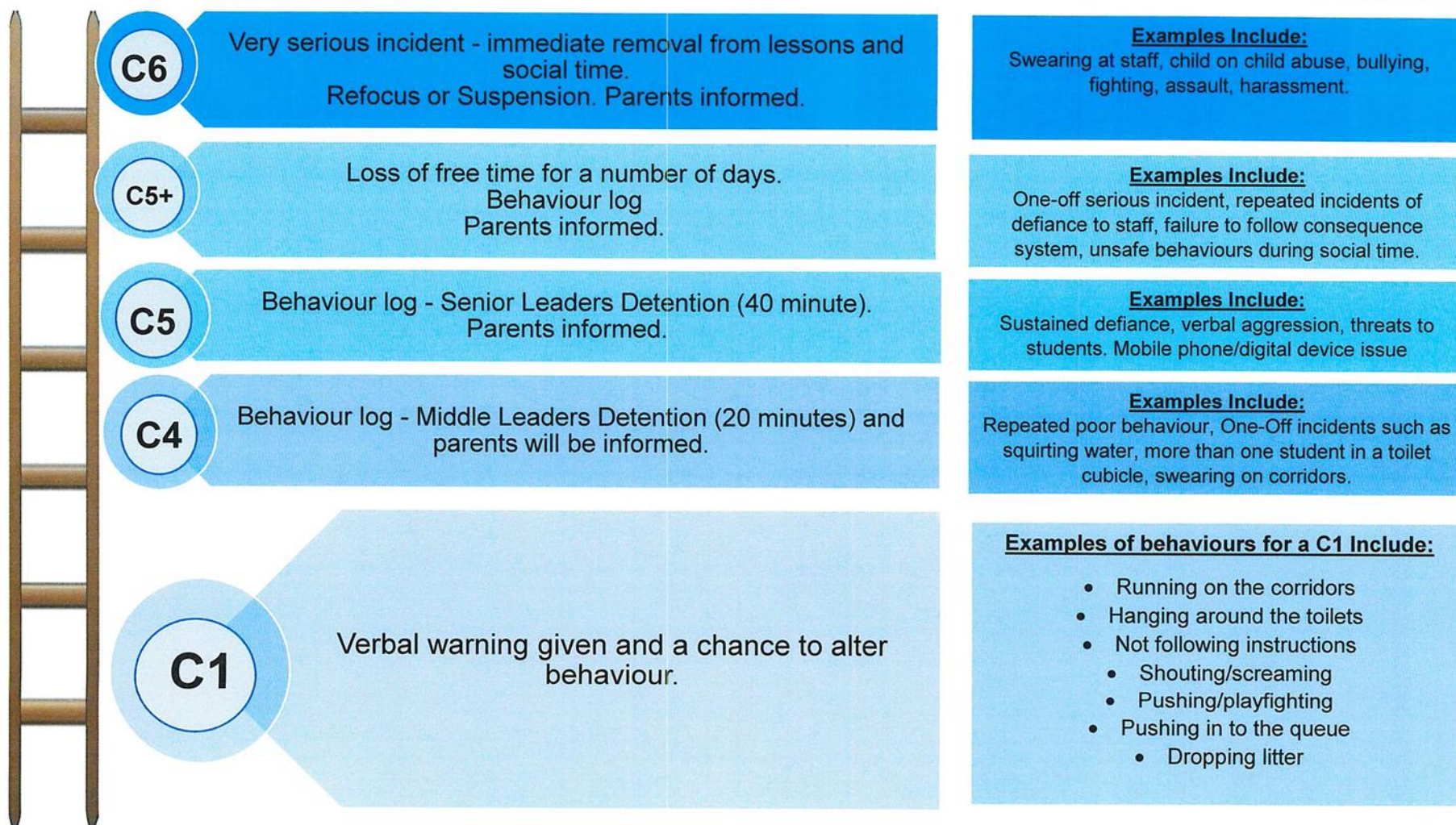
Stars of the year nominated for work in subjects, highest number of achievements, outstanding contribution to Caldew Community.

Parents invited to an awards presentation ceremony.



## Around the School Behaviour Ladder

At Caldew School we expect students to behave responsibly and follow instructions from staff.  
Below is a chart which sets out the school's behaviour curriculum.





## Inside the Classroom Behaviour Ladder

At Caldew School we expect students to behave responsibly and follow instructions from staff.  
Below is a chart which sets out the school's behaviour curriculum.

