



New Mills School

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Wednesday 22nd July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is hard to believe that another academic year has come to an end. As I reflect on the past twelve months, I am struck by just how much our students have achieved and how much there is for our school community to celebrate.

Time and again, our students have demonstrated what it means to Think Big, Do the Right Thing and show Team Spirit. Whether through their learning, supporting one another, representing the school or embracing new opportunities, they continue to impress us with their ambition, kindness and resilience.

Across the school, our classrooms continue to be places where students are challenged, supported and encouraged to think deeply, ask questions and take pride in their learning. It has been a pleasure to see the confidence, curiosity and determination with which so many students have approached their learning throughout the year.

This has been another incredibly busy year, with opportunities extending far beyond the classroom. Alongside their studies, students have taken part in educational visits, residential experiences, Duke of Edinburgh, university visits, careers events, sporting competitions, performances, charity work and a wide range of enrichment activities. From our wonderful Class of 2026 Art Exhibition, Year 10 visits to local sixth forms and colleges, Year 9 university visits, wellbeing walks, our Year 6 transition programme, the school production and the many lunchtime and after-school clubs that continue to thrive, it has been fantastic to see so many young people challenge themselves, discover new interests and create lasting memories. School certainly doesn't stop at 3.05pm!

This term has also given us much to celebrate. Our first Rewards Evening recognised the achievements of students across Years 7 to 10, celebrating academic excellence and also effort, resilience, leadership, and contribution to our school community. It was a wonderful evening and one that we hope will become a valued New Mills School tradition (with a few more chairs next year!).

We are also incredibly proud of our students who have embraced opportunities beyond the classroom. More than 50 students successfully completed Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, demonstrating resilience, teamwork and determination, while almost 70 students enjoyed another fantastic PGL residential, challenging themselves through outdoor adventure and developing confidence and friendships that will last long after the trip.

Sports Day was another highlight of the term. Blessed with perfect weather, the day showcased the very best of New Mills School, with students competing enthusiastically, supporting one another and displaying our three school values throughout. Whether competing, cheering on their peers or simply enjoying the occasion, it was wonderful to see such school spirit. Events like these, together with everything our staff offer throughout the year, simply would not be possible without their dedication and willingness to give so

generously of their time. We are incredibly grateful for the wealth of opportunities they provide for our students.

We are immensely proud of our Year 11 students, who approached this summer's GCSE examinations with maturity, determination and resilience. Throughout the examination period, they have been fantastic ambassadors for the school, and it was a pleasure to celebrate the end of their five-year journey with us at this year's Prom. It was a wonderful evening and a fitting way to mark the friendships, memories and achievements they have made during their time at New Mills School. We now look forward to celebrating the next milestone with them on Results Day on 20th August.

The recent spell of exceptionally hot weather certainly tested us all. I would like to thank our students for the mature and sensible way they adapted to the conditions and our staff for ensuring that learning continued in a calm, purposeful and supportive environment throughout.

As always at this time of year, we say goodbye to a small number of colleagues as they begin new chapters in their careers and lives. We thank them for their commitment to New Mills School and wish each of them every success and happiness for the future.

At the same time, we are delighted to welcome several colleagues into new leadership roles from September. Miss Ashton, who recently received the prestigious National Society for Education in Art and Design Workplace Champion Award 2026, becomes our new Head of Art and Community Engagement. Miss Heap takes on the role of Head of CEIAG, continuing to strengthen the support and guidance we provide as students prepare for their futures, while Mr Appleyard will become our Think Big Alumni and Aspirations Lead, helping us build stronger links with former students.

If you are a former New Mills School student, we would love to hear where life has taken you. Whether you would like to share your experiences, support careers events or inspire our current students, please get in touch via alumni@newmillsschool.co.uk.

September is already shaping up to be another exciting milestone for the school. We are delighted to be welcoming a full Year 7 cohort of 150 students, alongside a number of families joining us through in-year admissions. It is wonderful to see such confidence in New Mills School and reflects the hard work of our students and staff, together with the continued support of our families and wider community.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the support you have shown throughout the year. The partnership between home and school plays such an important role in our students' success, and we are incredibly grateful for the trust you place in us.

On behalf of everyone at New Mills School, I wish you and your families a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in September as we continue to provide every young person with the opportunities, support and experiences they need to develop the knowledge, character and confidence to thrive and make a positive difference in the world.

September Return

A reminder that our new Year 7 students will return to school on **Monday 7th September**, arriving for **8.35am** to begin their New Mills School journey.

Students in **Years 8 to 11** should arrive at **11.20am** on the same day. This later start allows us to welcome and support our new Year 7 students as they settle into secondary school before the rest of the school returns.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back and wish all our students a fantastic start to the new academic year.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Heather Watts', written in a dark ink.

Heather Watts
Headteacher