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8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

A huge thank you to everyone for bearing with us this week as we try to make sense of government expectations and what we feel as Trust we can safely deliver. All parents and carers should have by now received a letter from me explaining how we are triaging vulnerable children and children of Key workers, we felt we had to do this as many of our schools were filling up at a rapid rate and there was a risk we were going to go beyond our agreed numbers on our Risk Assessments. Again thank you to all of you who have been so understanding and if I may reiterate **please do not send your child to school unless you absolutely need to.**

Remote learning is now up and running across all of our schools using a series of learning platforms. If you are struggling to get access to this resource please let your Head Teacher know and they can talk to us about any additional support we may be able to offer. Please remember that we are asking so much of our staff at the moment to teach up to 50% of our children in school and provide home learning resources and materials. Not every teacher has a Teaching Assistant in their room and even when there is additional support this may be for one specific child who has very specific needs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff for everything they are doing, not just teaching children but supporting with Free School Meals, organising additional resources and in some cases delivering food on their way home to those in need. I think our staff are an incredible team and we are lucky to have such a committed group of people.

For those children coming into school I have to commend them for how they are working so hard and remembering the systems we have in place to keep them safe – they are a credit to you all. For those children joining us remotely they too are engaging well and working hard.

We obviously continue to live in uncertain times and whilst the roll out of the vaccine is speeding up we are still going to be living with the current restrictions for some time. As a Trust we will update you as regularly as we can with any new information and we are constantly reviewing our offer to support you and your families.

Best wishes and stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Rickeard".

Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer
Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust