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Dear Parents and Carers

I am in no doubt you will have heard the announcement last night from the Prime Minister Boris Johnson regarding the returning to school of all pupils from 8<sup>th</sup> March. As a Trust we welcome this news and cannot wait to see all of our children back in school. After the announcement in the House of Commons we did receive the first set of guidance measures for wider opening and my team are now reading this carefully along with your Head Teacher to ensure our children come back as quickly and as safely as possible.

Our first impressions are that this return will be similar to that which we had in September. There will still be the need for 'bubbles' and we will need to be vigilant if any child or member of that child's household develops symptoms of COVID. Hands, Face, Space is going to be a slogan that we need to readopt and ensure we all pay attention to. But most importantly I hope this is going to be the beginning of a lasting solution to having our schools thriving and alive with the sounds of happy children.

It is clear that we will still have to live with this virus for many years to come but as a Trust we want to look to the future with hope and excitement delivering the best possible outcome for your children to give them the best start in life. The past year has been a challenge and there are so many people who have been effected by the Pandemic. As CEO there are so many people I want to thank for their hard work but for fear of missing anyone out I simply want to say thank you to everyone for playing your part in getting us to where we are today.

I will be in touch again as we move closer to the 8<sup>th</sup> and your head teachers will also be updating and reviewing risk assessments along with other information about our wider return. Again your cooperation and patience will be the key to us moving forwards – I look forward to our partnership continuing as we hopefully get back to where we all long to be.

Best wishes,

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

**Paul Rickeard**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust**