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5th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you can imagine there remains an awful lot of uncertainty with regards to how many children we should have in school. In Lockdown 1 we worked with our specialist Health and Safety Team to accurately determine how many children we could accommodate in our buildings in line with social distancing guidance and as such allocated the places accordingly. As yet the only guidance we have is that for vulnerable children and children where at least one parent is a key worker a child should be given a place. However, it may be that on review of risk assessments under the new lockdown we will be unable to accommodate all children who request a place, whilst also ensuring our risk assessments sufficiently mitigate risks for staff and children in school.

In light of this we have asked our heads to use a triage system when determining which children will be able to access the provision where numbers in classes are higher than our risk assessments allow:-

Category 1: Vulnerable children as determined by the DFE Guidance

Category 2: Both parents key workers or if a single parent a key worker as determined by the DFE Guidance

Category 3: One parent key worker as determined by the DFE Guidance

It may well be that even after this triage has taken place we still may not have enough physical capacity. If this is the case in your child's school we will support your headteacher in making these decisions.

Please can I appeal to all of you, that where possible, you do keep your child at home and that parents who may fall within the key worker category only request places under this category if they are actually required to attend work. We do have a large number of parents who have no other choice than to request a space. In these difficult times we will need to work together to ensure the best outcome for our children.

Best wishes,

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

Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer
Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust