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12<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Yesterday I caught up with our Head Teachers and Business Managers to hear how the wider reopening of our nine schools has gone. I was delighted to hear the stories of children being happy, safe, excited and ready to learn. I was also pleased to hear that rates of attendance across the Trust were really high and that staff have been incredibly happy to have all of our children back.

Today will be the end of the first week following wider return and we will very quickly reach the milestone of the Easter Holiday. It is easy to get carried away but I would ask that you remain alert to the fact that we are still living with a pandemic. Yesterday we did have to send a bubble of children home from one of our schools due to a positive case and, talking to Local Authority heads of service, this is not unique. We all want to get back to 'normal' as quickly as possible but please remember we are still living with a stay at home order and we need to all do our part in following the guidance.

Just a few reminders, please make sure you wear a mask if on one of our school sites; try to avoid congregating with others at the school gates and finally please remember the social distancing rules still do not allow us to have 'sleep overs' and visitors who are not in our bubble at home. I know how eager everyone is to meet up and spend time with friends and, in some cases families, we have not seen in person for such a long time. However, we have to remain patient and our schools will have to continue to protect our staff work force as many are yet to receive the vaccine and are still vulnerable to catching the virus.

Finally can I once again thank you all for the support you have given us. We all have the same aim in our Trust because every child does matter and we never want to see one of our children left behind.

Best wishes,

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

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