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16th September 2021

Dear parents and carers

We are delighted to have your children back in school after the summer break and hope we can return to some form of normality after the difficult last year.

I just wanted to remind all of our parents and carers that there is no longer a need for children to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive Covid-19 case. However, in the hope of reducing disruption and illness in our school communities, and fulfilling our obligation to maintain school attendance as far as possible, please can I urge you to book a PCR test for your child if they have been in close contact with a Covid-19 positive case and, in particular, where there is a positive case in your household. We would also really appreciate children who are close contacts repeating a test after a few days after a negative result as we are seeing several cases of initially negative results followed by a positive a few days later.

Our schools are no longer able to be involved in identifying or notifying close contacts and are unable to inform parents of specific positive cases in school. Close contacts will be identified and contacted by NHS Test and Trace in line with the revised government guidance. However, there will, unfortunately, be incidences of positive cases across our schools so we would urge all parents and carers to look out for any sign of symptoms and if your child is unwell or there is any doubt please keep them off school and book a test to ensure we limit infection as far as possible. Our schools continue to work in line with their risk assessments and there are still measures in school such as enhanced hygiene, cleaning and ventilation but we would ask parents and carers to also assist in reducing risk in our schools by arranging tests and following the guidance above.

Yours sincerely

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

Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer
Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust