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Date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to officially welcome you to the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust. Over the last several months my colleagues and I have worked closely with your school and are delighted your school is joining our Trust family of schools.

In our Trust our absolute priority is to ensure “*every child matters and no child is ever left behind*”. The clear vision for our Trust is to ensure all of our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive academically, socially, culturally and spiritual and we believe the drive for excellence and effectiveness in our schools is paramount, but not merely because the Government says so. We want to enable every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God as a sign and expression of the Kingdom which is at the heart of the Church’s distinctive mission.

As the CEO of the Trust I am looking forward to working with your school alongside those already in the Trust. You will notice we have not changed the name or uniform of the school and nor have we made any other significant changes. As explained during the consultation process we do not consider there is any need to make such changes when our schools are performing well. My role within the Trust is to ensure that your school remains distinct to your community and continues to serve you and your children in the best possible way it can. To that end we have upgraded some of the behind the scenes equipment to support your school and we are already supporting the school through our Trust networks and school effectiveness support, including working with our specialist education Challenge and Support Partners.

The real difference that we hope you will see through your school joining the Trust is that we hope to make it even better. As the education system faces so many challenges we feel that one of the best things we can do for our schools is help them to work more closely together; sharing resources and experience that improve outcomes for children whilst protecting their unique ethos and identity in serving the children and families of their local communities.

Some parents have asked if they will see me regularly in your school and the answer to that is no. This is not because I don’t want to spend time in your schools. Only nine years ago I was a Headteacher before working for the diocese and I loved being part of my school community. However, my role is more strategic to ensure the multi academy Trust as a whole effectively serves each of our family of schools and the children in the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle. You have a Head Teacher and

I must allow them to fulfil their role in looking after your school. However, I have asked each school if I can attend parents open evenings in the new year in order to introduce myself and I will be meeting with your head teachers on a regular basis to monitor the success of your school in my role as CEO.

As I have said this is an exciting time and I along with my team look forward to working more closely with our leaders on the journey of education that helps to prepare your child for their future steps in life. I am committed to working with your school to continue to support them to ensure a high-quality education for all children, enabling them to achieve and excel in all areas of the curriculum and make good if not excellent progress, from whatever their starting points, overcoming any barriers to learning and valuing their education.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at up and coming parents open evenings and would encourage you to visit our Trust Website to learn more about how we work to support your school.

Yours sincerely



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