

**Councillor Peter Earley
Cabinet Member for
Children, Young People and Learning**

**Quadrant
The Silverlink North
Cobalt Business Park
North Tyneside
NE27 0BY**

**Mobile: 07583 106185
E-mail: peter.earley@northtyneside.gov.uk**

Thursday 21 May 2020

Dear Headteacher,

On behalf of the Mayor, my Cabinet colleagues and all of the Elected Members of North Tyneside Council I wanted to thank you for everything you and your teams are doing to support our children and young people during a very difficult time for us all. The Mayor, Cabinet and I also wanted to explain our support to you, in the light of the national debate over expanding the number of children attending school.

The strength of our work with children and families in North Tyneside is based on longstanding partnership and a shared desire to do our collective best for everyone in our care. That is more important than ever during a period of significant disruption for us all, but particularly for the 40 000 plus young people in the Borough.

Just as every child and every family is different, I know from working alongside you that every school is different. Teams have different strengths, serve different communities and operate in very different buildings and spaces. For that reason, working with the Officer team, we have tried to support you in the delivery of your school's plan for the last two months as an individual response to the challenges we have faced together.

Following the publication of the UK Government's recovery strategy and the publication of national guidance for schools the Mayor, Cabinet and I see no reason for that to change.

I know, for some time now, working groups have been looking at what might be possible to expand the offer you are currently making to our children and families and, when the time is right, what can be done to safely increase the number of children attending each school.

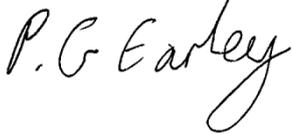
The Mayor, Cabinet and I are very clear that your first priority will be the safety of your team, the children in your care and their families and carers. I want you to know that we share that priority and trust and support your judgement on what is right for your school. While the Government has provided some indicative timetables and ambitions, judged against certain criteria in terms of the national position regarding COVID-19, we know that plans and approaches will be different in each school. We also know the national picture and guidance is likely to evolve and we will continue to monitor that and work alongside you to understand it.

While our work together has been based on how to interpret the guidance, we expect schools to move in different ways and at different times depending upon their circumstances. Faced with a completely new situation and a unique context in each school, there can be no "right" or "wrong" answer: While, as politicians, we may have policy views about the national discussion, ultimately, we choose to trust and support the education professionals in North Tyneside. We also feel we need to respect the choice families and carers make that they feel is the right one for their children.

We all yearn for some normality and we all worry about the disruption to the education and care for our young people and I know you will do all you can to safely increase the work you are doing with our children and families. But I know you will do that safely and with all the passion for learning that you have brought to the Borough in each of your different ways.

Thank you for what you have done and what you are doing. If the Mayor, Cabinet or I can do anything more to help, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. G. Earley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'E' at the end.

PETER EARLEY
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING