

SCHOOL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is happening with secondary schools?

Secondary schools in Pembrokeshire are moving to online or remote learning from Monday, 14th December (today, Friday 11th December, is the last day this term for face-to-face teaching).

Online learning will continue until end of term, Friday 18th December.

What is happening with primary schools, special schools and the Pembrokeshire Learning Centre?

Primary schools, Portfield School and the Pembrokeshire Learning Centre will move to online learning from Tuesday, 15th December (Monday, 14th December will be the last day this term for face-to-face teaching).

Online learning will continue until end of term, Friday 18th December.

Why have these decisions been taken?

The Welsh Government made the decision to move secondary schools to online learning as part of a 'national effort to reduce coronavirus transmission' following expert advice that the public health situation in Wales was deteriorating.

Pembrokeshire County Council has taken a decision to move primary schools to online learning from Tuesday, 15th December because of concerns that the situation will only get worse in the coming week if no action is taken.

The rising number of cases in the community is having a significant effect on staff and pupils having to self-isolate, leading to major staffing issues within schools as well as putting considerable pressure on the Test Trace Protect teams.

The decision has been made in the best interest of staff, pupils and their families.

Is this the Christmas holiday starting early?

No. Learners will be expected to join online or remote learning sessions provided by schools until the end of term. It is especially important that pupils stay at home and do not mix with other households, otherwise these measures will have no impact and the virus will continue to spread exponentially. Parents also have a big role to play by following the guidelines and remember that coronavirus thrives through human contact. The more people you see, the greater risk of catching or passing on the virus.

I'm a critical worker and need to continue working

All schools are expected to provide childcare for critical workers who have no other care options. Parents requiring support with childcare should contact their child's school. Schools must also ensure there is provision for our most vulnerable children. Parents will be contacted by schools about this.

What happens with free school meals?

Families with children eligible for free school meals will receive payment to cover the days they are learning from home.

When will pupils return to schools?

At present, all pupils are planned to return to both primary and secondary schools on Monday, 4th January after the Christmas holiday. This is subject to any further advice from the Welsh Government over coming weeks. Any changes will be communicated to parents and carers as soon as possible.

Pembrokeshire County Council Director for Education, Steven Richards-Downes, said: "Pupils in our schools have been extremely responsible in their response to the challenges faced during this term, and we are very proud of them.

"I would like to thank you as parents/carers for your co-operation and all our staff for their dedication this term.

"I would now ask that all learners please engage with the online and remote learning available for the remainder of the term and urge both pupils and parents to follow guidelines about not mixing with other households to prevent the further spread of the virus."