

Date · Dyddiad 17 December 2021  
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## Pembrokeshire County Council Cyngor Sir Penfro

WILL BRAMBLE CBE.  
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**Please ask for  
Os gwelwch yn dda gofynnwch am**

**Steven Richards-Downes**

To: Parents & Carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation over the course of this year in supporting your children and our schools in what can only be described as challenging circumstances. You may already be aware through the press and other media sources that the Education Minister has written to Education Directors and school leaders regarding the start of the spring term 2022 and the challenges we may face as result of the Omicron variant of COVID19.

We all want to keep your children safe and provide continuity of learning for all our learners that is why we have made no changes to the end of term arrangements in our schools with a number of our schools continuing their term into next week.

The spring term will bring a new set of challenges for all schools as the Minister for Education has asked schools across Wales to return to the very high-risk level in the local decision making framework.

As a result of that decision all schools have been provided with two planning days at the start of next term. In some cases, schools had already planned INSET days at the start of next term and may be unable to change those arrangements. Schools will be able to provide you with a revised return to school date via their usual communication channels by the end of school today.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English, and will respond within a maximum of 15 working days. We will respond in the language in which the correspondence is received (unless you ask us to do otherwise). / Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb cyn pen 15 diwrnod gwaith fan bellaf. Byddwn yn ymateb yn yr un iaith â'r ohebiaeth a dderbyniwyd (oni bai eich bod yn gofyn i ni wneud yn wahanol).

For a copy in large print, easy-read, Braille, audio, or an alternative language, please contact Pembrokeshire County Council on the number above. / Os am gopi mewn print mawr, fformat hawdd ei ddarllen, Braille, sain neu mewn iaith arall, cysylltwch â Chyngor Sir Penfro ar y rhif uchod.

Schools are being asked to implement from January higher levels of mitigation similar to those as we exited from lockdown. This means that we will return to:

- contact groups from January
- schools may re-introduce staggered starts and finishes; and
- changes to timetables in order ensure that they can keep learners safe.

Learner wellbeing and support will be part of our key priorities as well as keeping learning going.

On the two planning days, schools will test their distance learning systems should a return to these be required next term as result of the ongoing concerns regarding COVID19. We hope that these will not be needed in the weeks ahead but we will need to wait and see in the spring term if these are required.

We are committing to supporting our schools and school leaders in minimising the impact on learners' education.

Those families who are eligible for free school meals will receive payments for the 4th and 5th of January to support them as school kitchens will not be operating on these dates.

Face coverings will continue to be required by secondary aged learners in all indoor areas, including classrooms, where physical distance cannot be maintained.

Staff and learners of secondary age and above are urged to continue regular Lateral Flow Testing - the strong advice is to test three times in the week before returning to school and to then continue testing regularly three times a week after the start of term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Richards-Downes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Steven Richards-Downes**  
**Director of Education**

