

Dear Parents, Carers and School Colleagues,

RE: COVID-19

I am writing directly to you to provide reassurance at the current time in relation to the coronavirus outbreak of COVID-19. Schools provide education and care to all pupils in our communities. School leaders and their staff are professionals who continue where possible to come into work and prioritise our children and young people because they deserve and thrive on the experiences that schools provide. I applaud their continued support for education in Pembrokeshire at this difficult time.

I have also become aware that a number of our school leaders and staff have been subjected to verbal abuse and online abuse for following the advice provided directly by the government. This is unacceptable. Where parents and families have genuine and legitimate concerns they should raise them through the school's complaints policy.

All our schools are following the guidance provided by Public Health Wales and the Welsh Government in relation to school opening. The latest guidance is here. <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-educational-settings-guidance> Closing our schools when we are currently able to provide sufficient staff would have a significant impact on our communities. This includes key workers particularly in our health service. If schools were closed at the current time many key workers would have no option but to stay at home and this would disrupt our health service. In due course we may have to change our position and that will be communicated via the council's website and schools

Yours faithfully,

Steven Richards-Downes

Acting Director for Children and Schools