More important than ever to keep ill children off school

Keep your children off school if they are unwell – and especially if they have any symptoms of Covid-19.

That's the message from Pembrokeshire County Council as the autumn term gets underway.

It comes as cases of Covid-19 are confirmed in schools elsewhere in Wales.

Cllr Guy Woodham emphasised the importance of parents working with schools and the local authority to help combat the pandemic.

"Under no circumstances should pupils attend school if they feel unwell," said Cllr Woodham, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

"This is even more important if they display one or more symptoms of Covid-19."

The symptoms are:

· New continuous cough
· High temperature
· Loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell
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More details on symptoms are available at: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/

Pupils must also **not** attend school if:

· They have tested positive to Covid-19 in the past 10 days
· They live in a household with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19 or who has tested positive to the virus in the past 14 days

If a pupil begins to show symptoms while at school, there is a clear procedure for what will happen next:
· The pupil will be moved to an isolated room. Their parents/ guardians will be asked to collect them and any siblings immediately. Younger children will be supervised while awaiting collection by a member of staff wearing PPE or maintaining a two-metre social distance. Once home, the child and their household must start self-isolating straightaway.
· The parents/ guardians of the pupil will be advised by the school to call **111** for medical advice. If the advice says the child might have coronavirus, parents need to call **119** to arrange for a test or visit https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test

In the event of a negative test (or the illness being diagnosed by a doctor as non Covid-19) the pupil can return to school. Parents/guardians must provide proof of a negative Covid-19 test result, where testing is required.

In the event of a positive test, the child must stay at home for 10 days (and the rest of the household for 14 days) beginning on the first day after which symptoms started. There is no need to inform the school of a positive result (they will have already been notified).

Potential contacts of a pupil who has tested positive for Covid-19 will be identified and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. They will only be required to take a test if they develop symptoms.

Cllr Woodham stated: "I want to reassure everyone that a great deal of work has taken place to minimise risk of transmission of the virus in a school setting.
"However, if Covid-19 is suspected or confirmed, procedures are in place to deal with the situation quickly and effectively.

"We are well prepared for whatever the autumn might bring. School staff are vigilant to pupils displaying any symptoms, and are ready to take appropriate action.

"However, to minimise the risk of Covid-19 being transmitted in schools, I would once again urge all parents to keep their children home if they are unwell and especially if they have any symptoms.

"This is the best way to protect the school environment and ensure that as many pupils as possible are able to continue with their education this autumn, which is of course what we all want to see happen."

·   A factsheet for parents on what to do if your child is displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19 can be viewed at https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/children-and-schools-transition-to-the-new-normal