
**Decision Session – Executive Member
for Education, Children and Young
People**

7th May 2020

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

School term dates for the 2021/2022 school year

Summary

1. This report seeks approval of the attached school term dates for schools for whom the City of York Council (CYC) is the employer, for the school year beginning in September 2021.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People is recommended to approve:
 - the draft term dates as in Annex A

Reason: to meet the statutory requirements of legislation including the Education Act 2002, (Section 32), and other related legislation.

Background

3. This report continues to utilise the previous progress made in following a robust process for setting future school term dates for our schools, alongside an increasing number of partner LAs across the region with similar aims.
4. CYC aims to ensure that term dates set for future school years are appropriate for both schools and residents, including not only parent/carers and pupils wholly within the York LA area, but those with children attending, or those parent/carers themselves employed in schools in neighbouring LA areas.
5. Term dates are set annually by CYC on behalf of all schools for whom CYC is the employer – that is all community, voluntary-controlled, community special or maintained nursery schools. The responsibility for setting term dates for other types of schools rests with the employers (governing body/academy trusts), though these

schools have traditionally followed those dates set by CYC, with very little deviation from the CYC set dates by academy trusts.

6. A coordinated method to developing school term dates continues to be in place across 25 LAs in the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber regions since around 2012. The aim of coordinating the approach was to mitigate the impact of varying term dates for those families who live, go to school, or are employed by schools in more than one LA area. These principles, followed independently by each LA each year create harmonised dates and reduce any unwelcome variation, whilst maintaining the length of terms and key holiday periods and avoiding split weeks.
7. CYC have strictly followed these guiding principles, agreed previously, with the aim of minimising any differences with other LAs in previous years, though other LAs have varied these dates locally or for other objectives such as to equalize the length of some half terms or to reflect local priorities. Notably Leeds and Sheffield have in recent years set a fixed Easter break in the first two weeks in April that results in some differences from other LAs who, in line with these regional principles – arrange a fortnight's school holiday around the Easter weekend.
8. Building on coordinated term dates, officers have continued to work with an increasing number of other LAs to further the regional use of these agreed set of principles for future school years, and to produce sets of dates with as few differences as possible.

Dates for the 2021/2022 school year

9. Whilst a regionally agreed set of principles remains in place, it seems sensible that York dates for the 2021/2022 school year and beyond be generated from these agreed principles.
10. As there has not yet been a substantial move by any local academy to start to exercise their freedom to vary their term dates, and whilst there remains a 'mixed economy' of community and academy schools it would seem appropriate for CYC to continue to set term dates that apply to all schools where CYC is the employer, and for other schools and academies to follow these dates in the interests of residents.

11. For the 2021/2022 school year, officers have therefore again developed a set of draft dates that follow these regional principles. These are detailed in Annex A.
12. It was recognised that it is collectively in the interest of all LAs to align dates and save for those LAs with a fixed Easter break (Leeds and Sheffield); it is likely that all remaining LAs who have thus far participated with the regional group will likely set dates identical to York's for the 2020/2021 school year. This includes our immediate neighbours North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC), subject to their own consultations and decision making procedures.

Consultation

13. Between 29 November 2019 and 20 December 2019, all York schools, regardless of school type (community, academy etc) were provided with these draft dates and the regional principles for comment, with the dates being made available on the yorkeducation.co.uk, CYC's school-facing website.
14. No school has formally responded to the consultation.

Future Strategy

15. Several other LAs in the region have, adopted these regional principles formally. In meeting in September 2019, other LAs indicated they also wish to formalise the principles through their respective decision making processes. Many expressed their wishes to act in concert with CYC and recommend to their respective decision-makers to:
 - i. follow the agreed regional principles in future years and only deviate from these where there was good reason to do so on a local level – for example for a fixed Easter break;
 - ii. continue to work collaboratively across the region by setting out a clear policy and communicating draft dates for forthcoming years, and coordinating the timing and release of these dates for the next year collectively in future;

Options

16. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People is recommended to approve:

- i. the draft term dates as in Annex A for the 2021/2022 school year

Council Plan

Safe Communities and Culture for All.

17. The setting of coordinated term dates in assists resident families' planning and reduces the amount of time families with children at more than one school have to arrange alternative childcare or time away from their employment.

A Greener and Cleaner City of York Council

18. The setting of coordinated term dates allows for resident families with more than one child to transport to school to coordinate their school attendance and reduce the need to transport children to different LAs for different school holidays so minimising transport for school purposes.

A Better Start for Children and Young People

19. A region wide agreement to implement term date principles allows transparent, consistent and effective use of school holidays to facilitate parents/carers across the region making plans for the school holidays in advance.

An Open and Effective Council

20. An open and transparent term date consultation involving all community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and academy schools allows for fair, effective and efficient coordination of school term dates for all.

Implications

Financial

21. Where schools/academies set different term dates to other schools can increase the costs of home to school transport into some schools where training days and term dates are not aligned. For this reason early setting of term dates where all schools have had

the opportunity to influence these dates reduce the likelihood of this happening.

Human Resources

22. There are no HR implications.

Equalities

23. There are no implications relating to equalities.

Legal

24. There are no legal implications; so long the LA sets term dates for schools for whom the LA is the employer.

Crime and Disorder

25. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

26. There are no IT implications.

Property

27. There are no property implications.

Other Implications

28. There are no other implications.

Risk Management

29. Due to the current school closures caused by the Covid-19 restrictions, we currently do not know when schools will reopen and what measures will be required in order for schools to reopen in part or fully. This could have a longer-term impact on future academic term dates which are unknown at this point.

Contact Details

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	Report approved		Date 17/02/2020
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None			
Wards Affected:			All ✓
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A	2021/2022 proposed York term dates for adoption
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