
Meeting of Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services and Advisory Panel

10 June 2008

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

School Term Dates and Holidays 2009/2010, 2010/2011 & 2011/12

Summary

- 1 This report:
 - recommends options for term dates and holidays for the school year 2009/2010, 2010/2011 & 2011/12
 - outlines the consultation responses from schools and the Teachers' Panel
 - reports on action taken by the Local Authority (LA) to align the dates with those of neighbouring authorities

Background

- 2 The responsibility for setting the school term and holidays dates rests with the local authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. Voluntary Aided schools have the discretion to set their own term dates, but do not usually depart significantly from the pattern established for other schools in the authority.
- 3 It is a statutory requirement that schools are open for 190 days in the year. Teachers are required to work for a further 5 professional development days. Under current arrangements, the term dates and holidays decided by the LA allow for the full 195 days. Individual schools are free to decide on the timing of the 5 Professional Development Days which are usually added to the beginning and end of terms.
- 4 Parents and staff have often asked for greater regional consistency around term dates between local authorities and for earlier publication of those dates. In response, colleagues across the region have met to discuss establishing a set of guiding principles (Annex 1) to aid the setting of term dates. Colleagues attending these meetings agreed that new principles to govern term date patterns should be based on Local Government Association (LGA) principles, with some flexibility.

Consultation

- 5 The authority is required to consult with the professional associations and has also chosen to discuss the term and holiday dates with all schools.

- 6 During spring term 2008, the LA undertook consultations with schools and the Joint Consultative Group on options for school terms and holidays in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 based on the regional discussions (attached as Annex 2). Feedback from this consultation with schools is attached at Annex 3.
- 7 The issue has also been discussed at Teachers' Panel a forum which engages the views of key union and professional bodies. In that discussion the view was consistently expressed that it seemed sensible to have terms more equal in length but that it was undesirable to have lots of part weeks especially for those schools running 10 day timetables or week a and week b etc. It was also agreed that it was important to be in line with neighbouring authorities as members of one family can easily work in schools/go to school in different authorities. The specific view was expressed from panel that Easter break should always be 2nd and 3rd full week in April or keeping Good Friday and Easter Monday in the middle of the Easter holiday week. In addition the view was expressed that for 2011/2012 the term should start on the 5 September 2011 with the preceding summer break being from 25 July 2012 as per Option 2.

Analysis

- 8 The setting of term dates is a process which generates considerable interest and not always consistent views. The principles established on a regional basis are worthy but not always easy to apply in practice. All recognise the potential benefits and applaud the efforts to seek a more consistent regional picture as well as attempts to plan dates on a more than single year basis. More radical solutions have been proposed in the consultation but such change would be out of keeping with LGA recommendations and totally out of step with neighbouring authorities. More radical solutions possibly need a national lead.
- 9 In putting this paper together we have recontacted particularly relevant neighbouring authorities to share proposed final dates. It is interesting and important that North Yorkshire is proposing exactly the same 2009/10 dates as are included in this paper. Colleagues in East Riding has however gone for an earlier Easter break which whilst locating the bank holiday firmly in the midst of the holiday also results in an earlier start to that holiday (29/03). It is potentially significant that neither authority has fixed dates for 2010/12. We are also aware that Doncaster has set dates for 2009/10 and 2010/11 which exactly match the proposals in York (Option 1 for 2010/11) – they have set provisional dates for 2011/12.

Options

- 10 The option is available of setting any term and holiday dates within the statutory requirement for the number of days that schools are required to be open. However, given the guidance from the LGA which has informed the principles agreed at regional level, it would be important to set dates within that context. Options available include:

Option 1: To set dates for 2009/10 as per Annex 2 but to defer setting the dates for the ensuing years. This runs counter to the views expressed through consultation.

Option 2: To approve the dates for 2009-12 as per Annex 2 with a decision to support one of the stated alternatives available for 2010/11.

Option 3 : To approve the dates for 2009-11 as per Annex 2 with a decision to support one of the stated alternatives available for 2010/11 and set provisional dates for 2011-12.

Corporate Priorities

- 11 It is a statutory duty of the authority to set term and holiday dates. One key aspect of setting dates must be to support the teaching and learning experience and therefore decisions in this paper do relate to the corporate priorities of:
- improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and their families in the city
 - Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects

Implications

- 12 There are no Financial, HR, Equality, Crime and Disorder Property or IT implications of this paper.

Legal

- 13 Under s.21 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986, as amended by s.115 of The Education Reform Act 1988, it is the duty (stated in the school's articles of government) of the LEA, in the case of a county or controlled school, or governing body of an aided or special agreement school, to determine the dates when schools terms and holidays are to begin and end.

Risk Management

- 14 The responsibility to set term and holiday dates does not represent a major risk for the authority.

Recommendation

The Advisory Panel is recommended to advise the Executive Member to approve the pattern of school terms and holidays for:

- 2009/10 as proposed in Annex 2
- 2010/11 (Option 1) as proposed in Annex 2

The Advisory Panel is recommended to advise the Executive Member to set provisional dates for 2011/12 as proposed in Annex 2 and to ask officers to bring further report in 2010 confirming or amending those dates as part of a paper which sets dates to 2014.

Reason: To provide clarity for parents, schools and pupils on term dates in City of York

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 27 May 2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *None*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

School Calendar - Guiding Principles for Yorkshire Region

- 1.0 The 12 Yorkshire Authorities listed will work together to establish common school holiday dates each year:

Barnsley	Leeds
Bradford	North Yorkshire
Calderdale	Rotherham
Doncaster	Sheffield
East Yorkshire	Wakefield
Kirklees	York

- 2.0 The school year will consist of 195 school days. Pupils must attend on 190 of those days.
- 3.0 The starting point for consideration of each year's holiday pattern will be the pattern recommended by the LGA for that school year modified as per these principles.
- 4.0 Wherever possible, in any academic year, terms should be of equal length and split weeks avoided or kept to a minimum. Where there is an odd number of weeks the second half term should be the shorter of the two.

5.0 **Start of the School Year**

The school year will normally start on the first day of September.

6.0 **Autumn Half Term**

The Autumn half term break will be the five days which are the last period Monday to Friday in October. According to the year, October half term can start as early as Monday 21 and as late as Monday 27 October.

7.0 **Christmas Break**

The Christmas break will include at least 10 school days, and will normally start at the end of the school day on the Friday which is on, or otherwise immediately prior to, 22 December. It will include the New Year's day holiday which is outside that period, and the day after New Years Day, where this is a weekday.

8.0 **February Half Term**

The February half term holiday will be five days Monday to Friday, which divides the term as far as possible into two equal parts. Where there is an odd number of weeks the second half term will be the shorter of the two.

9.0 **Easter Break**

The Spring Term will normally end at the close of the afternoon session on the Friday before Good Friday. The holiday will be 10 school days.

Where the LGA recommended patterns would result in a break between the Easter bank holidays and the school Easter holiday, consideration will be given to modifying Easter to incorporate the bank holidays in the school holiday. The Easter bank holidays could be at the start (with the Spring Term ending at the close of the afternoon session on the

Thursday before Good Friday), middle, or end of the school Easter break, but never outside of the break itself.

10.0 Spring Bank Half Term

The Spring Bank half term will be five days Monday to Friday from the statutory holiday which falls as the last Monday in May.

11.0 End of the School Year

Taking into account the above pattern, term will end on the date which achieves 195 school days of which five days shall be declared as training days. The term will normally end on the third Friday in July.

The summer break will not be less than five weeks and preferably not less than six weeks.

12.0 Exceptions

Some LEAs (such as Bradford and Calderdale) have historically provided for a number of occasional (training) days within the schedule. These days allow schools to be responsive to their respective community needs. The schedule normally provides for between 3 – 5 occasional days which are found by reducing the half terms to three days in length.

13.0 Polling Day

In nominating the five training days, governing bodies must accommodate the use of the school as a polling station, where needed. Where schools close on polling day governing bodies should use this as a training day.