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

20 February 2018

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

School term dates for the 2019/2020 school year

Summary

1. This report seeks approval of the attached school term dates for schools for whom the Local Authority (LA) is the employer, for the school year beginning in September 2019.
2. It also seeks approval of a strategy for setting future term dates alongside our neighbouring Local Authorities for future school years.

Recommendations

3. 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.

Also to approve:

- the principles of setting future term dates that were previously agreed between 25 Local Authorities, as set out in Annex B

Background

4. This report provides an update on progress made in the last 12 months towards establishing a robust process for setting future school term dates for our schools. It also contains information on developing our relationships with neighbouring LAs in our current practices.

5. The LA 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.
6. Term dates are set annually by the LA on behalf of all schools for whom the LA 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 the LA.
7. A coordinated method to developing school term dates has been 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 (as summarised as local policy in Annex B), followed independently by each LA each year would create harmonised dates and reduce any unwelcome variation, whilst maintaining the length of terms and key holiday periods and avoiding split weeks. CYC have strictly followed these guiding principles 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.
8. Throughout 2017, officers have worked with officers of our neighbouring LAs to further the regional use of these agreed set of principles for future school years, and in the absence of any change of government policy to amend these roles and responsibilities, 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.

Dates for the 2019/20 school year

9. Whilst a regionally agreed set of principles remains in place, it seems sensible that these principles should continue to be consulted and York dates for the 2019/2020 school year and beyond be generated from these.

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 the LA to continue to set term dates that apply to all schools where the LA is the employer, and for other schools and academies to follow these dates in the interests of residents.
11. For the 2019/20 school year, officers have therefore again developed a set of draft dates that follow these regional principles. These are detailed in Annex A.
12. In October 2017 officers shared these dates and principles with colleagues from our two neighbouring LAs – North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC), who following a sub-regional meeting in November 2017 have now drafted identical dates to those proposed by CYC. Since this time other LAs such as Hull have also been consulted and confirmed that identical dates will be recommended through their respective processes.

Consultation

13. Between 12 December 2017 and 12 January 2018, 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, although several head teachers have in conversations with officers raised that aligning the dates with our two neighbouring LAs and all York schools following the same dates should be considered the two most important objectives.

Future Strategy

15. In November 2017, in addition to agreeing draft dates for 2019/20, officers from NYCC and ERYC also expressed their wishes to act in concert with CYC and recommend to their respective LAs 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;

- ii. exercise maximum influence regionally by setting out a clear policy and communicating draft dates in advance of other LAs and coordinating the timing and release of these dates collectively in future;
 - iii. for the next period of drafting dates – for 2020/21 – to examine setting several years draft dates in advance – for example setting dates for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 concurrently – a process to start later in 2018.
16. It was proposed that CYC host a further meeting later in 2018 and collectively undertake a role in coordinating future dates between all four LAs proactively earlier in the school year, and from there aim to lead sub-regionally and influence our neighbouring LAs at an earlier stage in their respective processes.

Options

17. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People is recommended to approve:
- i. the draft term dates as in Annex A for the 2019/20 school year
 - ii. the principles of setting future term dates that were previously agreed between 25 Local Authorities, as set out in Annex B, alongside our neighbouring LAs, principally North Yorkshire County Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council, in future years and to instruct officers to work to the aims of Paragraph 15 above.

Council Plan

18. **Prosperous City for all** – 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.
19. **A council that listens to residents** – residents are served best by coordinating term dates between all schools where they attend or are employed. Where there are differences, these differences are often queried by residents.
20. **A focus on frontline services** – setting dates well in advance gives residents clarity in regard to school holidays.

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. No direct implications.

Contact Details

Author:	Chief Officer Responsible for the report:		
Tom Chamberlain School Services Manager – Policy and Strategy Children, Education and Communities 01904 554239	Jon Stonehouse Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities		
	Report approved	√	Date 7/2/18
Specialist Implications Officer(s) None			
Wards Affected:			All ✓
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A	2019/20 proposed term dates and neighbouring LA comparison
Annex B	Principles for setting term dates