

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

School term dates for the 2022/23 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 2022.

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. City of York Council (CYC) aims to ensure that term dates set for future school years are appropriate for both schools and residents. In setting term dates the council has also considered the term dates set by neighbouring LA's to ensure that there is an alignment to prevent potential disruption for parents/carers who have children in or work in schools in neighbouring LAs.
4. 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). Historically these schools have followed the dates set by CYC, with very little deviation from the agreed dates by academy trusts.
5. 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. 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.

6. The council has strictly followed these guiding principles, with the aim of minimising any differences with other LAs in previous years. Some 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.
7. 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 to minimise potential problems for parents/carers.

Dates for the 2022-2023 school year

8. 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 council 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.
9. For the 2022/2023 school year, officers have therefore again developed a set of draft dates that follow regional principles as discussed in the Yorkshire and Humber Admissions Group. These are detailed in Annex A.
10. It was recognised that it is collectively in the interest of all LAs to align dates 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 2022/23 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

11. Between 21 September 2020 and 31 October 2020, 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 yorkeducation.co.uk, CYC's school-facing website.
12. No school has formally responded to the consultation.

Future Strategy

13. 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

14. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People is recommended to approve:
 - i. the draft term dates as in Annex A for the 2022-2023 school year

Council Plan

Safe Communities and Culture for All.

15. 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

16. 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

17. 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

18. 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

19. 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

20. There are no HR implications.

Equalities

21. There are no implications relating to equalities.

Legal

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

Crime and Disorder

23. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

24. There are no IT implications.

Property

25. There are no property implications.

Other Implications

26. There are no other implications.

Risk Management

27. 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

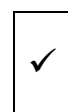
Author:

Rachelle White
School Admissions Manager
Children, Education and
Communities
01904 554239

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Maxine Squire
Assistant Director Education and Skills
01904 553007

**Report
approved**



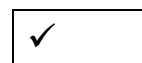
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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A - 2022-2023 proposed York term dates for adoption