

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities

School term dates for the 2024/2025 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 2024.

Recommendations

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

- the draft term dates as in Annex B

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 previously 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 2024-2025 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. Due to the late Easter break in 2025, officers have developed two sets of draft dates. One set that follow regional principles as discussed in the Yorkshire and Humber Admissions Group. These are detailed in Annex A. For 2024-25 the standard pattern leads to a very short 19-day half term due to a very late Easter and the Monday bank holiday at the end of May being slightly earlier than usual.
10. Annex B is an alternative option for term dates for 2024-2025 that provides a more balanced school year by moving the Easter and February half term holidays forward one week, to increase the Summer 1st half term from 19 to 23 days.

11. All CYC schools and MATs were consulted upon for the two term date options of Annex A and Annex B.
12. 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 similar to York's for the 2024-2025 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.
13. Our neighbouring LAs North Yorkshire County Council and East Riding of Yorkshire County Council have both consulted with their schools including the two options which we have consulted upon.
14. These term dates and bank holiday dates are correct at the time of consultation and determination. If there are any changes to national bank holidays, City of York Council will amend the term dates accordingly to ensure that there are 195 leave days, not including the 5 school training days determined by each school. As was required when the additional Jubilee bank holiday was awarded in 2021/2022 academic year.

Consultation

15. Between 30th November 2022 and 4th January 2023, all York schools, regardless of school type (community, academy etc.) were provided with these draft dates and the regional principles for comment by email and with the dates also being made available on yorkeducation.co.uk, CYC's school-facing website.
16. Within the consultation period, we received feedback from two schools, which supported the term dates as shown in Annex B which provides a more balanced school year and a longer Summer half term.
17. We received one school response supporting the term dates in Annex A to allow for one training day to be used at the end of the school year.

18. As the NYCC and ERYC are looking to implement the term dates shown in Annex B we would advise that these term dates are recommended.

Future Strategy

19. Where possible we will continue to implement the guiding principles as will several other LAs in the region. However as with the term dates for 2024-2025 we can provide possible alternatives to create a balanced school year within the consultation period and will discuss this with our immediate neighbours (NYCC and ERYC)
20. 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

21. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People is recommended to approve:
 - i. the draft term dates as in Annex B for the 2024-2025 school year

Council Plan

Safe Communities and Culture for All.

22. 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

23. 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

24. 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

25. 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

26. There are no implications relating to Finance.

Human Resources

27. There are no implications relating to HR.

Equalities

28. There are no implications relating to equalities.

Legal

29. The report is in compliance with section 32 Education Act 2002 and the Council's responsibility to determine when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end.

Crime and Disorder

30. There are no Crime and Disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

31. There are no IT implications.

Property

32. There are no property implications.

Other Implications

33. There are no other implications.

Risk Management

34. There are no implications currently.

Contact Details

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Report approved

Date 03/03/23

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

None

Annexes

Annex A	2024-2025 Term Dates Standard Option
Annex B	2024-2025 Term Dates Option 1
Annex C	Equalities Impact Assessment for Term Dates 2024-2025