



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: John Bigley,
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Report of: *Andrew Jones, Director of Children's Services*
Report to: *Education, Children & Families Policy Committee*
Date of Decision: *8 March 2023*
Subject: *School Calendar 2024/25*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? People/E&S/JB/BK/23122021				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				

Purpose of Report:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2024/25 Academic year for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to approve:

The School calendar for the 2024/25 academic year. (Appendix A)

Background Papers:

Proposed School calendar – (Appendix A)

Provision for religious observance (Appendix B)

Consultation responses (Appendix C)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Anna Beeby</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
		Climate: <i>n/a</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Andrew Jones</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllrs Dawnn Dale and Mick Rooney</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: John Bigley	Job Title: Manager, Admissions & Access, Access & Inclusion
Date: 8 March 2023		

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Local Authority is required to consult annually and determine the school term dates for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
- 1.2 The Local Authority has always worked closely with schools that are their own Admission Authority and its neighbouring Authorities to try and agree the same school calendar for the benefit of parents.
- 1.3 Consistent school calendars are particularly important where school staff work in one Authority but their children attend school in another Authority. This is a common theme that emerges through consultation every year and is something that has been supported by Unions.
- 1.4 The school year must contain 190 teaching days and 5 additional teacher training days. Any Governing Body wishing to determine its own term dates must adhere to this requirement.
- 1.5 There are many issues that are important to a wide range of stakeholders when considering the school calendar. These include the cost of family holidays, the length of some of the terms and the impact of operating a different calendar to neighbouring Authorities on childcare arrangements.
- 1.6 Whilst the Local Authority aims to consolidate its Calendar with neighbouring Authorities this is not always possible. When setting its calendar, the Authority does adhere where possible to a set of principles that have been established across Yorkshire and Humberside Authorities.

The Council is keen to obtain views from all stakeholders on the school calendar, especially from schools, parents and young people. An extensive consultation took place during the Spring Term 2016 for the 2017/18 academic year with parents, school leaders and other stakeholders. The Authority consulted on two models as follows:

Option 1 – The traditional model

The traditional model has a one week half term break at October, February and May and a six week summer break. The Easter break has traditionally ended at the end of the school day on the Friday before Good Friday. Incorporating the bank holidays.

Option 2 – Fixing the Easter Break

Easter Day falls on the Sunday following the first full moon after the first day of Spring, 21 March. This means that Easter can be as early as 22 March or as late as 25 April. If the Easter Break falls in late April this creates a long half term and impacts on Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) preparation, not least because there is also the May Day bank holiday. All schools consulted with supported the idea of fixing the Easter Break at the first two weeks of April, irrespective of where the actual Bank

Holiday falls. This would allow for more even Spring Terms and also provide a minimum of 3 weeks preparation time for SATS which all schools were supportive of.

- 1.7 A City wide consultation took place with parents, schools and stakeholders for the 2017/18 calendar. There were 1200 responses received. **71%** of those responding preferred the fixed Easter model.
- 1.8 A school calendar was agreed for 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 that fixed the Easter break at the first two weeks in April.
- 1.9 The same model is proposed for 2024/25. Good Friday falls on 18 April and Bank holiday Monday on 21 April 2025. Under the proposed calendar the Easter break commences on 31 March 2025. This model will create 6 week and a 5 week half terms in the Spring Term of 2025.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 Thriving neighbourhoods and communities

A common school calendar supports families with primary and secondary aged children and reduces the need for children to be taken out of school during term time for the purposes of holidays. A common school calendar across the City supports teachers and non-teaching staff.

2.2 As an in touch organisation

The school calendar can impact on communities in different ways, both in Sheffield and with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority has consulted widely with all stakeholders and wants to hear the views of all stakeholders to arrive at the most effective and consistent school calendar.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Authority carried out a consultation process for the 2023/24 school calendar from 12 January to 24 February 2023.

Consultation took place with:

- All Headteachers
- Chairs of Governors
- Parents (via schools and the Council Website)
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Teaching and non-teaching Trade Unions
- Other stakeholders

The proposed calendar was also posted on the City Council Website.

- 3.2 In response to the proposed calendar for 2024/25, Four responses were received from the following:

	Primary	Secondary	Other	Total
In Support	1	2	0	3
Against	1	0	0	1

Responses to the consultation are provided at **Appendix C**

As with the consultation for the 2023/24 calendar (3), there have been very few responses received to the proposed calendar. The Authority is keen to hear from all stakeholders on the school calendar. Direct communication was sent to Headteachers and Governors by the Director of Children’s Services on 8 January 2023 to highlight the consultation for 2024/25. The consultation was also placed on the Council’s website. Responses are pro-actively sought. The fact that there are only a small number of responses received is indicative that the majority of consultees are happy with the proposed calendar.

3.3 Neighbouring Authorities have also been consulting on both the traditional model and the fixed Easter Model. School calendars have been determined as follows:

	October half term	Christmas	February half term	Easter	Spring Bank Half Term
Barnsley	28 October – 1 November	23 December – 3 January	24-28 February	14 – 25 April	26 May – 30 May
Derbyshire	30 October – 3 November	23 December – 3 January	17 – 21 February	7 – 20 April	26 May – 30 May
Doncaster	28 October – 1 November	23 December – 3 January	17 – 21 February	31 March – 11 April	26 May – 30 May
Rotherham	28 October – 1 November	23 December – 3 January	17 – 21 February	31 March – 11 April	26 May – 30 May
Sheffield	28 October – 1 November	23 December – 3 January	17 – 21 February	31 March – 11 April	26 May – 30 May

Barnsley will operate different February half Term and Easter. Derbyshire will operate a different Easter break.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights provision for schools to make arrangement for religious observance in order to respond to different community requirements. **(Appendix B)**

5.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 5.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications to this report.

5.3 Legal Implications

- 5.3.1 Failure to set a calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools would breach the statutory duty set out in section 32 of the Education Act 2002, as amended. There are no other legal implications..

5.4 Climate Implications

- 5.4.1 There are no climate implications to this report.

6. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 In response to the overwhelming support for fixing the Easter Break during the 2017/18 consultation process the Authority has only consulted on this single model for 2024/25.

7. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 It is recommended that **Appendix A** be approved as the model school calendar for the 2024/25 academic year. The calendar applies to all Community schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools, Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools. Voluntary Aided Schools, Trusts and Academies that are their own Admission Authority are recommended to adopt the model calendar to promote consistency across the City.
- 7.2 It is likely that Church Aided Schools will have their Easter Break around the religious festival. This has always been the case and Aided Schools will continue to set their own dates at Easter.
- 7.3 There was overwhelming support for fixing the Easter break at the beginning of April when the proposal was first consulted upon for the 2017/18 school calendar. It is accepted that there are many different views and opinions on the school calendar. The purpose of the consultation was to invite opinion and comment from all stakeholders. There have not been many responses to the proposed calendar,

nor has there been any strong opposition to the proposed calendar for 2024/25 which indicates that the support expressed under last year's consultation continues.

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