

TITLE OF REPORT: Proposals for School Term Dates 2020/21

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. The report asks Cabinet to approve the School Term Dates for 2020/21

Background

2. In order to allow schools, parents and other stakeholders to plan into the future, it is necessary to agree school term dates a significant period in advance.

Proposal

3. It is proposed that the calendar for 2020/21, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, be approved.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the calendar of School Term Dates for 2020/21 as set out in appendix 2.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To allow future planning to take place.
- (ii) Make effective and efficient use of LA resources.

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Policy Context

1. This proposal supports the Council's strategic approach of Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives.

Background

2. The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 3181) require schools to have at least 380 half-day sessions (190 contact days with pupils) and (195 days for staff) in each school year. This is consistent with the 195 days a year required by a teacher's statutory conditions of service: the additional five days are for continual professional development. The term dates for Community Voluntary Controlled and Special schools are determined by the Council, whilst Voluntary Aided schools and Academies are decided by the governing body of each school. This means that governing bodies of Voluntary Aided schools and Academies can depart from the local authority (LA) term dates if they wish. Many Voluntary Aided schools can and do depart from those dates determined by the LA and there is no requirement to consult the LA, however, such schools are required to act reasonably when setting their dates.
3. Given the continuing development of the DfE Academy conversion process it is possible that some schools may develop and determine different term date calendars following changes to their school status. Whenever possible any such changes will be published by the LA.
4. The Local Government Association (LGA) Standing Committee on the School Year have previously circulated proposed School Term Calendar with a view to encouraging local authorities towards a degree of standardisation of dates. This is based on the following principles:
 - Start the school year on a September date as near as possible to 1 September.
 - Equalise teaching and learning blocks (roughly 2x7 and 4x6 weeks).
 - Establish a two-week spring break in early April irrespective of the incidence of the Easter Bank Holiday. (Where the break does not coincide with the Bank Holiday the date should be, as far as practicable, nationally agreed and as consistent as possible across all local authorities.)
 - Allow for the possibility of a summer holiday of at least six weeks for those schools which want this length of break.
 - Identify and agree annually designated periods of holiday, including the summer holiday, where Head Teachers are recommended not to arrange teaching days.
5. The proposed term dates in Appendix 2 are based on a discussion with most neighbouring LAs.
6. The proposal starts the term on the 7th September 2020 which avoids broken school weeks as outlined in the 2019/20 report and is in line with the term dates for Newcastle and South Tyneside LAs. This also fixes the spring bank holiday in line with the Local Government Association strategy establishing a two-week spring break in early April, which also covers two bank holidays. It allows 2 continued professional development (CPD) days in term time requiring the 3

remaining training days to be completed as twilight sessions. It is important to achieve, as near as possible, a match with neighbouring LAs. Parents resident in Gateshead and who work in other LAs or have children in other LA schools and vice versa can make better arrangements for their childcare and have regard to a wide range of personal and domestic requirements. Conflicting dates also work against the effective and efficient use of resources between LAs when collaborating on joint events or on the delivery of truancy sweeps.

Consultation

7. The proposed dates have been shared with other local authorities in the region, Gateshead Head Teachers, Teachers' JCC membership, Unison, GMB and other representatives, the Diocesan Bodies and the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People.
8. The trade unions previously asked the Council to consider delaying a return in September 2020 by a further week resulting in a 7-week summer holiday and avoid broken weeks. This was consulted on and the majority of schools who responded agreed to this proposal.

Alternative Options

10. In theory there are many options that can facilitate arriving at a school term calendar which allocates 190 teaching (contact with pupil) days and 5 continued professional development days. Normally it is not viewed helpful to develop what could result in a broad range of choices, as it is contrary to the principle of trying to achieve a degree of regional and national alignment.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. **Resources**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications as a result of this report.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** - advance notice of school term dates enables parents and other stakeholders to consider a broad range of domestic and personal arrangements.
 - c) **Property Implications** - None
12. **Risk Management Implication** - None.
13. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – Every effort is made in setting dates to take account of holiday requirements created and a result of faith.
14. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - Evidence does show the potential for an increase in youth crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour during periods when young people are not in school. The Council seeks to address this 'risk' by collaborating with partners to offer activity programmes during common holiday periods.
15. **Health Implications** - None

16. Sustainability Implications – None.

17. Human Rights Implications – None.

18. Area and Ward Implications - All.

19. Background Information-

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) regulations 1999(SI 1999 No 3181)