

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills held at 5.00
pm on Thursday, 3 August 2023

Present:

Members: Councillor Dr K Sandhu (Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Service):

Education and Skills S Heawood

Law and Governance L Knight, T Robinson

Apologies: Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)
R Sugars

Public Business

1. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable interests.

2. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February, 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

3. **Determination of School Terms and Holidays - 2024/25**

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills which provided the outcome of consultation and sought approval of the School Terms and Holidays calendars for 2024/25.

Currently the Local Authority (LA) is required to set term and holiday dates for community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. All schools in England are free to decide when their school day should start and end. Governing bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in foundation and voluntary aided schools. Academies and free schools are responsible for setting their own terms and holiday dates.

Under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 in the case of a community, voluntary controlled, or community special school, or a maintained nursery school; the Local Authority is required to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are set, and the governing body is required to determine the times of the school sessions. Governing bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in foundation and voluntary aided schools. The relevant academy trust is responsible for setting the duration of the school year and term and holiday dates for

academies and free schools. Central Government is currently looking at the setting of term dates to help pupils catch up on missed work, this could be either in the form of longer school days, or shorter holiday periods. The LA will keep apprised of these developments and make any changes required.

The Local Authority believes that a standard set of holiday dates adopted by all Coventry schools will be better for school attendance, the organisation of admissions to Year Reception & Year 7, and for parents and carers arranging childcare and transport. All Coventry schools will be requested to adopt the proposed term dates to ensure this continuity.

The Coventry City Council principles and protocols for term dates, following the national guidance, were taken into account when setting the option for consideration:

- A school year is 195 days, with 190 pupil days and 5 teacher days;
- 1 teacher day is determined by the Local Authority and 4 days by individual schools;
- Statutory holidays are observed;
- Schools prefer, especially secondary schools, full weeks of teaching where possible;
- Schools prefer a full week break at half-term and two full weeks at Easter and Christmas; and
- Half-term holidays are set at the same time as those of neighbouring local authorities where possible.

The consultation ran for 8 weeks from 3rd March 2023 to 1st May 2023. Consultation documentation was shared with headteachers and governing bodies of Coventry schools and academy trusts, and Trade Unions. It was also available on the Coventry City Council Let's Talk Coventry webpage. A total of 43 responses were received to the consultation. In total, 29 (67%) agreed with the proposed term dates and 13 (30%) did not agree. A large proportion of responses were from parents/carers (65%) with headteachers, teachers, governors and Trade Unions also commenting.

Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments if they do not agree with the term dates. With regards to the comments received who were not in agreement, there were a number of reasons stated, with the main being the cost implications on holidays and breaks by aligning with neighbouring authorities - the shorter Summer term due to the lateness of Easter was also referenced.

Through consultation, the majority of responses were positive. Previous consultations have highlighted the importance of aligning term dates with bordering and other neighbouring authorities. Where Coventry have set different term dates to neighbouring authorities previously, this has presented many issues (including access to home to school transport and impact to working arrangements) and required Coventry City Council to make a last-minute change to term dates, which could have presented a legal challenge. Local authorities within the West Midlands (including the bordering local authorities, Warwickshire and Solihull) have proposed or published these dates.

The Cabinet Member discussed with officers the balance of the term dates and the consultation process and responses.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1) Adopt the School Terms and Holiday calendar for 2024/25 set out in appendix 1.**
- 2) Invite the Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities and the Governors of Trust Schools and Academies to recommend the same calendar for their schools.**

4. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

5. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 5.05 pm)