



Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Time and Date

5.00 pm on Wednesday, 2nd October, 2024

Place

Diamond Room 1 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2024.
 - b) Matters arising
4. **Determination of School Terms and Holidays - 2026/27** (Pages 7 - 14)

Report of the Director of Children's and Education Services
5. **Outstanding Issues**

There are no outstanding issues
6. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Tuesday, 24 September 2024

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Tom Robinson Governance Services, Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

By invitation: Councillor J Birdi (Shadow Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Public Access

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Tom Robinson

Governance Services, Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills held at 3.30 pm on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor Dr K Sandhu (Cabinet Member)
 Councillor J Blundell (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by
Directorate):

Education and Skills S Heawood, S Parker

Law and Governance T Robinson

Public Business

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable interests.

7. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 August, 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

8. Community and Voluntary Controlled School Admission Policies for 2025/26 and Co-ordinated School Admission Schemes for 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills which indicated that the Local Authority are required to determine the co-ordination schemes for school admissions in their areas and the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools.

In April 2006, Cabinet agreed that consideration of reports on school admission arrangements would be delegated to the appropriate Cabinet Member in years where there were no significant changes to admission arrangements. (Cabinet Minute number 253/06 refers). For 2025 there have been no substantive changes to the admission arrangements.

For context, The School Admissions Code 2021 requires admissions authorities to consult on admission arrangements every 7 years or more frequently where any significant changes are proposed. No significant changes were proposed to the co-ordinated admissions schemes or the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools since the last consultation for September 2020 admission arrangements. Therefore, no consultation has been required for 2025.

Community and voluntary controlled schools were notified on 24 October 2023 that arrangements including published admission numbers (PAN) for community schools would remain the same apart from an increase for Howes primary school. All schools were given until 7 November 2023 to raise any requests for change. No requests for changing admission numbers were received.

Following an introduction to the report from officers, the Shadow Cabinet Member for Education and Skills explored the current admissions arrangements with academies in the City and questioned whether any schools carry out their admissions processes without help from the Council.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1) Determines the Admissions Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary, Infant and Junior Schools for 2025/26.**
- 2) Determines the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2025/26.**
- 3) Determines the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2025/26.**

9. Determination of School Terms and Holidays - 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Director of Education and Skills which provided the outcome of consultation on and sought approval of the School Terms and Holidays calendars for 2025/26.

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.

In addition to the report, the Shadow Cabinet Member asked about the alignment process for school terms and holidays with neighbouring Local Authorities and if any were not matching.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1) Adopts the School Terms and Holiday calendar for 2025/26 set out in appendix 1.**
- 2) Invites the Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities and the Governors of Trust Schools and Academies to recommend the same calendar for their schools.**

10. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

11. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm)

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Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

2nd October 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor Dr K Sandhu

Director approving submission of the report:

Director – Children’s & Education Service

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Determination of School Terms and Holidays – 2026/27

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive summary:

This report informs the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills of the outcome of consultation and seeks approval of the School Terms and Holidays calendars for 2026/27.

Currently the Local Authority 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.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is recommended to:-

- 1) Consider the outcome of the consultation on School Terms and Holidays and agree a calendar for 2026/27;
- 2) Adopt the School Terms and Holiday calendar for 2026/27 set out in appendix 1; and
- 3) 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.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Proposed 2026/27 School Term and Holiday dates

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 (for academic year length.)

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Determination of School Terms and Holidays – 2026/27

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. 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 (LA) 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.
- 1.2. Generally, 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.
- 1.3. 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;
 - 4 teacher days are to be determined by individual schools, with 1 being set by the Local Authority
 - Statutory holidays are observed;
 - Schools (especially Secondary) prefer 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.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal.

- 2.1. The full details of the proposed term dates for 2026/27 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The protocols in paragraph 1.3 were complied with in the proposed option.
- 2.3. As part of a priority to align term dates with neighbouring authorities, Coventry has liaised with local authorities in the West Midlands region regarding their proposed term dates for 2026/27. Where term dates have previously differed across local authority borders, this has caused logistical difficulties, such as childcare for children who have different holiday dates.
- 2.4. Additionally, in previous consultations, headteachers have expressed a preference for school holidays to be set at the same time as those of neighbouring authorities. Therefore, the Local Authority is proposing one set of term dates for 2026/27, which are the same as those either proposed or published by other local authorities within the West Midlands region – including the bordering local authorities, Warwickshire and Solihull.
- 2.5. In previous years, teachers have expressed their preferences that pupils should have enough time in school after Easter to prepare for summer exams and expressed a preference for equal term lengths where possible.

- 2.6. The table below shows the term lengths for the proposed option. The dates consulted on as the proposed option were those agreed by the West Midlands Regional Group, and those either proposed or published by other local authorities within the West Midlands region – including the bordering local authorities, Warwickshire and Solihull.

Term	Dates	Days per term
Autumn Term 1	1st September to 23 rd October 2026	39
Autumn Term 2	2 nd November to 18th December 2026	35
Spring Term 1	4 th January to 12 th February 2027	30
Spring Term 2	22 nd February to 25 th March 2027	24
Summer Term 1	12 th April to 28th May 2027	34
Summer Term 2	7th June to 21st July 2027	33

- 2.7. Term one is 74 days in length (inclusive of the Inset Day), term two is 54 days and term three is 67 days. It is noted that the Christmas and Easter holiday dates have been proposed around bank holidays to allow for full weeks of teaching as per the protocols outlined in para 1.3. Previously, teachers have expressed that term three is longer than term two to allow for examination preparation. Due to the dates of the Easter bank holidays, this has been achievable.
- 2.8. Having met the criteria in the protocols outlined in paragraph 1.3, and preferences given from previous consultations in paragraphs 2.3 - 2.5, the proposed option above was consulted upon.
- 2.9. Following agreement at the West Midlands Regional Group, Coventry, alongside the neighbouring authorities of Warwickshire and Solihull all concluded their consultations and propose adopting the term dates as outlined above.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. The consultation ran for 8 weeks from 18th March to 13th May 2024. 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 48 responses were received to the consultation. In total, 42 (87.5%) agreed with the proposed term dates and 6 (12.5%) did not. A large proportion of responses were from headteachers (43.8%) and parents/carers (35.4%) with teachers and Trade Unions also commenting.
- 3.2. Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments if they did not agree with the proposed term dates. There were a number of reasons stated, with the main reason being the cost implications on holidays and breaks by aligning with neighbouring authorities- the length of the Autumn term was also referenced.
- 3.3. Through consultation, the majority of responses were positive. Previous consultations have highlighted the importance of aligning term dates with bordering and other neighbouring authorities. Local authorities within the West Midlands (including the bordering local authorities, Warwickshire and Solihull) have proposed or published these dates.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision.

- 4.1. When the Cabinet Member decision becomes effective, schools will be informed of the approved school terms and holidays calendar for 2026/27. The approved calendars will also be published on the City Council website.
- 4.2. Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Authorities, governors of voluntary aided schools, governors of trust schools, free schools and academy trusts will also be informed and invited to recommend the same calendar for their schools.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5.2. Legal Implications

Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 requires the local authority in England to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled, community special school or a maintained nursery school. Under this provision in s.32 Education Act 2002, the governing body is also required to determine the times of the school sessions.

Additionally, the governing body in the case of foundation, voluntary aided, special schools and academies are required to determine school terms and holidays dates and school sessions, as well as the times of the school sessions.

The corresponding provisions for fixing term and holiday periods in Wales are set out in s.32A Education Act 2002.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan

The Local Authority is required to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled, community special schools, and maintained nursery schools. Appropriate school term and holiday dates can increase attendance and aid curriculum planning therefore helping raise pupil achievement.

In line with the One Coventry Plan priority Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities, consultation feedback has highlighted the length of terms can directly impact pupils education outcomes and attendance.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Current legislation on the number of teaching sessions has been complied with. Consultation documentation was shared with headteachers and governing bodies of Coventry schools and academy trusts and Trade Unions, and responses invited from all. Trade Unions were asked to consider the calendar options to ensure that the options were acceptable to their members.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

6.3.1 Centrally employed staff on Teachers Pay and Conditions will have their holiday pattern determined by this consultation.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

6.4.1 Although all the views of different groups are considered in setting term dates, government legislation and the protocols given in paragraph 1.3 limit the flexibility of the dates for school terms and holidays. Before the start of the consultation on 2026/27 term dates, Warwickshire, Solihull, and West Midlands local authorities were consulted to find out if there were any issues they believed would affect setting the school term and holiday dates. No specific equalities issues were identified through this process.

6.4.2 The consultation on the Coventry 2026/27 term dates took place from 18th March to 13th May 2024. The consultation aimed to establish the views of parents/carers, headteachers, teachers, governors, other school and academy trust employees and trade unions.

6.4.3 The consultation document was sent to headteachers and governing bodies of Coventry schools and academy trusts and Trade Unions for wider circulation to parents/carers, school/trust employees and Diocesan Boards of Education. The consultation documentation was also available on the Let's Talk Coventry webpage, and available in other formats and languages on request.

6.4.4 The responses mainly reflected the views of parents/carers, headteachers, teachers, governors and Trade Unions, and did not raise any equality issues.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

It is desirable to align school holidays with those of neighbouring local authorities to minimise the difficulties to families such as those where parents/carers work or live in a different authority to that of the school attended by their children or where siblings attend schools in different authorities. It is noted that Warwickshire and Solihull have concluded their consultations and have adopted the term dates that are the same as those proposed for Coventry.

Report author(s):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Chloe Webb	Education Capital Strategy Manager	Education and Skills	10/06/2024	10/06/2024
Rachael Sugars	Head of Education Improvement & Standards	Education and Skills	21/06/2024	04/09/2024
Safda Mahmood	Advocacy Team Leader	Legal Services	14/06/2024	21/06/2024
Thomas Robinson	Governance Services Officer	Governance Services	30/05/2024	30/05/2024
Finance: Sarah Kinsell	Finance Manager	Finance	10/09/2024	11/09/2024
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Sukriti Sen	Director of Children's & Education Services		04/09/2024	06/09/2024
Members: Cllr Kindy Sandhu	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Members	04/09/2024	09/09/2024

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings

Appendix 1

Academic year – 2026/27
Preferred option

PROPOSED TERM DATES 2026-2027

Sep-26							Oct-26							Nov-26							Dec-26								
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S		
31	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4							1									
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31					
														30															