

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

03 August 2023

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor Dr K Sandhu

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Education and Skills

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Determination of School Terms and Holidays – 2024/25

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 2024/25.

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 2024/25
- 2) Adopt the School Terms and Holiday calendar for 2024/25 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 2024/25 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 – 2024/25

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. 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.
- 1.2. 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.
- 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;
 - 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.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. The full details of the proposed term dates for 2024/25 can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The protocols in paragraph 1.3 were complied within 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 2024/25. 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. 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, Coventry City Council is proposing one set of term dates for 2024/25, 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.
- 2.4. 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. Due to the timing of Easter 2025, alongside alignment with neighbouring authorities that has not been possible. Headteachers and teachers have also

frequently mentioned that incomplete teaching weeks lower attendance and keeping in mind the standard bank holidays in May, this was a factor in the proposed term dates to allow maximum full weeks of teaching.

- 2.5. 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	2 nd September to 25 th October 2024	40 (1 inset day)
Autumn Term 2	4 th November to 20 th December 2024	35
Spring Term 1	6 th January to 14 th February 2025	30
Spring Term 2	24 th February to 14 th April 2025	35
Summer Term 1	28 th April to 23 rd May 2025	19
Summer Term 2	2 nd June to 21 st July 2025	36

- 2.6. Term one is 75 days in length (inclusive of the Inset Day), term two is 65 days and term three is 55 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. Teachers have expressed preference of a longer term three, however, this is not achievable due to the lateness of Easter 2025.
- 2.7. Due to the timing of Easter, and the bank holidays within May, the only way to lengthen this term would be shortening the Summer holiday period and proposed date of return after Christmas and the proposed date of return following the Summer holiday; however, this would have significant implications upon HAF (Holiday Activities Fund) and other holiday programmes. Over the last few years, it has been learned that pupils sometimes require schools for hot meals and therefore a shorter summer holiday (6 weeks) is better. Alternatively, the Christmas holiday break could be brought forward; however, the majority of previous consultees have noted that this is too early. In addition, altering the dates to shorten the first term would put Coventry out of alignment with other local authorities; the majority of consultees want to align in order to reduce the issues of education and working across borders.
- 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. Warwickshire and Solihull have concluded their consultations and have adopted the term dates as outlined above.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. 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.

- 3.2. 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.
- 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. 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.

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 2024/25. 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 Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer

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.

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 2024/25 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 2024/25 term dates took place from 3rd March to 1st May 2023. 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.

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

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Finance: Sarah Kinsell	Finance Manager	Finance	28.06.2023	02.07.2023
Legal: Safda Mahmood	Advocacy Team Leader	Legal Services	28.06.2023	25.07.2023
Director: Kirston Nelson	Director	Education and Skills	28.06.2023	26.07.2023
Members: Cllr Kindy Sandhu	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Members	28.06.2023	18.07.2023
Thomas Robinson	Governance Services Officer	Governance Services	18.07.23	19.07.2023

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

Academic year – 2024/25
Preferred option

REVISED EDITION - 27/02/2023

School Term and Holiday Dates - 2024/25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Half Term	Days
1	40
2	35
3	30
4	35
5	19
6	36
Total	195

	Total days
Autumn Term	75
Spring Term	65
Summer Term	55

- School Holiday
- Public Holiday
- Teacher Training Day (+4 to be set by school)