

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

**13 February 2024**

**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 – 2025/26

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**Is this a key decision?**

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

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**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 2025/26

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 2025/26
- (2) Adopt the School Terms and Holiday calendar for 2025/26 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 2025/26 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 – 2025/26**

### **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;
  - 4 teacher days are to be determined by individual schools, with 1 being set by the Local Authority
  - 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 2025/26 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 2025/26. 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 2025/26, 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.

- 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	1st September to 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	40
Autumn Term 2	3rd November to 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	35
Spring Term 1	5th January to 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	30
Spring Term 2	23rd February to 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	25
Summer Term 1	13 <sup>th</sup> April to 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026	29
Summer Term 2	1st June to 20th July 2026	36

- 2.6. Term one is 75 days in length (inclusive of the Inset Day), term two is 55 days and term three is 65 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.
- 2.7. 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.
- 2.8. Following agreement at the West Midlands Regional Group, Coventry, alongside the neighbouring authorities of Warwickshire and Solihull all 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 18<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> November 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 36 responses were received to the consultation. In total, 27 (75%) agreed with the proposed term dates and 9 (25%) did not. A large proportion of responses were from parents/carers (42%) 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 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 2025/26. 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.

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 2025/26 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 2025/26 term dates took place from 18<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> November 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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Rachael Sugars	Head of Education Improvement & Standards, on behalf of Chief Partnerships Officer, Director of Education and Skills	Education and Skills	09.01.2024	18.01.2024
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Tom Robinson	Governance Services Officer	Governance Services	05.01.2024	05.01.2024

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Academic year – 2025/26  
Preferred option

Coventry School Term and Holiday Dates - 2025/26

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					

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Oct-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
Nov-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
Dec-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
Jan-26						
			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-26						
						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-26						
						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-26						
		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-26						
				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-26						
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-26						
		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-26						
					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-26						
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	25
5	29
6	36
Total	195

	Total days
Autumn Term	75
Spring Term	55
Summer Term	65

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

- Secondary School Induction Day