

26th July 2021

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

SCHOOL HOLIDAY AND TERM TIME DATES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 2023/2024 TO 2026/2027 AND QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE – CHANGE TO DATES FOR 2021/2022

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to determine Nottinghamshire County Council's school holiday pattern and term time dates for maintained schools for 2023/2024 to 2026/2027.
2. In addition this report seeks approval to amend the dates previously set for 2021/2022 following an amendment to The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations to enable schools to make provision for the additional bank holiday to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.

Information

3. The 1996 Education Act gives local authorities a statutory duty to determine school term dates and Nottinghamshire County Council is responsible under section 32 of the Education Act 2002 for fixing dates of terms and holidays of maintained schools. Schools must be open to pupils for 190 days (380 sessions) in an academic year, and 195 days for teachers.
4. It should be noted however that foundation, trust, voluntary aided schools and academies are responsible for setting their own holiday patterns. Members should be aware that these publicly funded schools are able to consult and set their own term dates which could, and at times do, differ to the dates set by Members for Nottinghamshire's maintained schools.
5. Nottinghamshire County Council has already set holiday dates for Nottinghamshire maintained schools up to 2022/2023 following the previous consultation that took place in 2017.
6. When setting dates for future years, the following principles have been considered:
 - the pattern must comprise 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days
 - ensuring that teaching and learning blocks are as equal in length as possible

- split weeks avoided where possible
- broadly confirm a fixed spring break as close as possible to Easter
- accepts that individual schools are responsible for setting their own teacher training days (the Council suggests one of these days be taken the first day back in September).

Consultation for 2023/2024 to 2026/2027

7. A period of consultation took place between 1st March and 2nd May 2021 which allowed key stakeholders (that is, parents, governors, teachers and other interested parties) the opportunity to comment on the proposals and suggest any changes to specific days, within the Council's preferred model of three terms.
8. The consultation, available as a background paper, outlined two proposals:
 - **Option A:** this follows the current model, which includes two weeks for the October half term break, a fixed spring break (generally the first two weeks in April) and generally five weeks break for the summer holiday
 - **Option B:** this suggests two weeks for the October half term break, a varied spring break and slight changes to the start and end dates for the academic year.
9. Consultees were invited to select their preferred option for each academic year. In addition, respondents were invited to submit additional comments on the options proposed.

Responses to consultation

10. 1,878 responses were received:
 - 1,844 online
 - 34 email

The majority of respondents were parents (including those with multiple roles, i.e. teachers, non-teaching, governors) – 1,512 (80.5%).

Other respondents included teachers, headteachers, non-teaching school staff, governors, members of the public, school age pupils under 16 and trade union representatives.

A summary of the preferred options is outlined below:

	Academic year 2023-24	Academic year 2024-25	Academic year 2025-26	Academic year 2026-27
No preference	202	195	219	207
Option A	1,207	1,186	1,187	1,208
Option B	469	497	472	463
Total	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878

11. The comments received on the proposals can be summarised as follows:
 - reduce number of school holidays
 - consistency across all schools and phases

- align with other local authority areas
- fixed dates and fixed holidays
- link Easter bank holidays to spring break
- longer breaks at Christmas and summer
- return to a single week at October
- full weeks rather than part weeks holiday
- retain existing pattern
- equal terms are preferable
- additional teaching weeks
- optional holiday periods for children.

12. In light of comments received the holiday patterns have been reviewed to take into consideration more equal terms where possible. These are attached as **Appendix 1**.

- **2023/2024** – the majority of respondents preferred option A. Consideration has been given to create a more equal spring term. This would result in February half term being moved a week earlier (12 February 2024) which means that the first spring half term is 5 weeks and 2 days and the second spring half term is 5 weeks 4 days. This aligns with Nottingham City area.
- **2024/2025** – the majority of respondents preferred option A. Comments were received in preference of integrating the Easter holiday with the set bank holiday dates. This also aligns with neighbouring local authority areas.
- **2025/2026** – the majority of respondents preferred option A. This gives a full 2 weeks break at Christmas.
- **2026/2027** – the majority of respondents preferred option A, to integrate the Easter holiday with the set bank holiday dates.

Other Local Authorities

13. In setting dates, consideration has been given to term dates of neighbouring authorities, particularly Derbyshire and Nottingham City.

- Derbyshire follow the traditional 3 term pattern with the spring break determined by the Easter Bank holiday dates. As a result of this, the February half term and Easter break has sometimes differed by 1 week. Christmas and summer holiday dates have broadly been the same, differing by the odd day. Derbyshire has set their holiday patterns up to 2024/25 and consideration has been given to their pattern where possible.
- Nottingham City has a slightly different model to Nottinghamshire's current model having adopted a shorter summer break and a spring break to coincide with the Easter bank holidays. They have set dates up to 2024/25, continuing with that model.
- Doncaster has recently consulted and is in favour of recommending fixing Easter as an early summer break during the first 2 full weeks in April and reverting back to one week in October.

- Leicestershire are consulting to retain the traditionally adopted model of an earlier summer holiday; longer autumn term; aligning autumn and spring breaks with other authorities and introducing a two week autumn half term break but shorter Easter break. The Nottinghamshire pattern has always differed from this authority.
- Lincolnshire traditionally adopt a model that is a single week for October half term.
- Rotherham has traditionally adopted a model that is a single week for October half term and a longer summer break.

Amendment to term dates for 2021/2022

14. A change to holiday dates for Local Authority maintained schools in Nottinghamshire for 2021/2022 was approved on 18th January 2021 following the government announcement on 12th November 2020 of the change to the 2022 late Spring bank holiday from Monday 30th May to Thursday 2nd June. This resulted in a further bank holiday for Friday 3rd June 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
15. Following that change an amendment to The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations came into force on 1st June 2021 reducing the number of statutory teaching sessions for the academic year 2021/2022 from 380 to 378 sessions (189 days).
16. This will enable all maintained schools to benefit from the additional bank holiday for the academic year 2021/2022 in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A revised school holiday calendar for 2021/2022 to reduce the final term by 1 day to facilitate this amendment is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Other Options Considered

17. Members could consider consulting further to revert to a single week in October half term.
18. Consideration has been given to the feasibility of setting more equal half terms in the summer; however this would involve moving the spring bank holiday week and potentially would impact on secondary exam timetables.
19. Consideration has been given for the additional day in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee to be close to the bank holiday. However, this is likely to impact on exam timetables and will potentially be close to dates set for standard assessment tests (SATS).

Reasons for Recommendation

20. To enable the County Council to meet its statutory responsibility to determine school holiday and term time dates for all maintained schools in Nottinghamshire.
21. There are relatively narrow options available given the set bank holiday periods and the proposals set out take into consideration the views of respondents.
22. To enable maintained school staff to benefit from the additional bank holiday in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, in line with legislation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

24. There are no direct costs involved in the process of setting school holiday dates. The responsibility for setting the holiday dates falls within the remit of the Group Manager for Education, Learning and Skills.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) agrees the school holiday pattern for 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 as outlined in **Appendix 1**
- 2) agrees the change to school holiday dates for 2021/2022, as outlined in **Appendix 2**, in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

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Constitutional Comments (LW 24/06/21)

25. Children & Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 25/06/21)

26. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[School holiday and term time dates for Local Authority maintained schools in Nottinghamshire 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 - report to Children & Young People's Committee on 22 February 2021](#)

- [Appendix 1 – Option A](#)
- [Appendix 2 – Option B](#)

[Queen's Platinum Jubilee: Change to school holiday and term dates for local authority maintained schools in Nottinghamshire for 2021/2022 - report to Children & Young People's Committee on 18 January 2021](#)

[The Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\)\(Coronavirus\)\(Amendment\)Regulations 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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