



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Individual Cabinet Member Report

Report of: Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director
Children, Young People and Families

Cabinet Portfolio: Children's Services

Date: 28 May 2014

Subject: School Calendar 2015/16

Author of Report: John Bigley, Manager, Admissions & Access
273 4097

Summary:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2015/16 year for Voluntary Aided and Community Schools. The proposed calendar is in line with that recommended by the Local Government Association. The calendar has been consolidated across all four South Yorkshire Authorities. The proposed calendar is also in line with that of Derbyshire with the one exception of the February half term.

The report also recommends Year 6-Year 7 transition dates in July 2014.

Reasons for Recommendations:

This annual report is submitted to ensure that the Local Authority meets its statutory duty under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 to determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for schools under its control (i.e. Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools) for the 2013/14 academic year.

Recommendations:

The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are requested to approve:

- (i) The School Calendar as presented at **Appendix C** for the 2015/16 Academic Year. This reflects the model that is proposed by the Local Government Association and with Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Authorities.
- (ii) Recommended transition dates for the primary to secondary for Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd July 2015.

- (iii) That schools traditionally used as Polling Stations for local elections be asked to designate the first Thursday in May as a Training Day.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

If Closed add – ‘Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph... of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).’

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
Cleared by: Laura Pattman
Legal Implications
Cleared by: Nadine Wynter
Equality of Opportunity Implications
Cleared by: Bashir Khan
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
No
Human rights Implications
NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic impact
NO
Community safety implications
NO
Human resources implications
Cleared by: Kath Selman
Property implications
NO
Area(s) affected
All
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Children's Services
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Children, Young People and Families
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press release
NO

Children, Young People and Families

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS 2015/16

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Local Authority has previously consulted upon and determined the school calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the statutory duty to set the School Calendar will be removed under Schedule 14 of the Deregulation Bill from 2015. At the time of writing this Bill has not been passed, therefore the proposed Calendar is set under the existing statutory provision.

2. What does this mean for the Sheffield people?

- 2.1 The Local Authority has always worked closely with schools that are their own Admission Authority and its neighbouring Authorities to try and agree the same school calendar for the benefit of parents.
- 2.2 The Authority works closely with colleagues to agree the same calendar, based on that currently recommended by the Local Government Association. The Authority also works with other Authorities across Yorkshire and Northumberland to establish consistency of approach. To that end a set of principles has been agreed to which all Authorities have regard when setting their calendar.

Shared school calendars are particularly important where school staff work in one Authority but their children attend school in another Authority. This is a common theme that emerges through consultation every year and is something that is supported by Unions.

- 2.3 The removal of the statutory duty to determine a city wide calendar provides an opportunity to explore potential variations to the school calendar and afford flexibility to individual school Governing Bodies to enable them to respond to the needs of their own communities.
- 2.4 The length of the school calendar does not change. It must contain 190 teaching days and 5 additional teacher training days. Any Governing Body wishing to determine its own calendar must adhere to this requirement.
- 2.5 Primary and Secondary Headteacher representative groups have indicated strongly that they would wish the Local Authority to continue to set a model school calendar in the event that the statutory requirement is removed.
- 2.6 The City Wide Learning Body is also supportive of a model calendar.

3. Outcome and Sustainability

3.1 Consultation took place with Headteachers, Unions and other local partners between 24 January and 8 March 2014.

3.2 In context of the Corporate Plan “Standing up for Sheffield”Council’s key ambitions for Sheffield this process provides an opportunity for an open and honest consultation with the key stakeholders who are working to provide “**A better life for children and young people**” and “**Raising attainment and aspiration.**”

4. Main Report

4.1 Every school day in a school maintained by the Local Authority is divided into two sessions and each school must meet for 380 sessions a year i.e. 190 days. Teaching staff are required to attend a further five days each year. In Sheffield, the published school year contains 195 days, five of which are training and development days to be determined by individual schools. In setting the school calendar, the Authority **must** ensure that these requirements are met.

4.2 In order to present a historical context, an extensive consultation was held with parents and schools in 2004/05 and 2005/06 to consider the need to create a pattern of terms which could best meet the needs of the school system and local people. The City Council Cabinet accepted and agreed the following principles:

- **That half terms should be of more even length wherever possible,** assisting in the planning of the curriculum.
- **To fix the Easter break to take place in the first two full or partial weeks in April wherever possible.** This would create more even half terms in the spring term.
- To try wherever possible to agree the same term and holiday dates with neighbouring South Yorkshire Authorities. Efforts are also made to agree the same school calendar with Derbyshire, though this does not always prove possible because of the high number of Authorities that border Derbyshire.
- **To reduce the number of “short” weeks in the academic year.** This will assist the Authority’s priority of improving school attendance.
- **The Spring Bank holiday is one week for all schools.** This has been in place in Sheffield since 2004/05.

The first two bullet points here represent important features of the Local Government Association’s rationale for reviewing the arrangements for the school year.

- 4.3. South Yorkshire Authorities have agreed common school calendars since 2006. To promote consistency between Authorities, the Government commissioned Education Leeds in the summer of 2006 to run a pilot across the whole of Yorkshire and Northumberland. The remit was to consult upon and agree a set of principles, based around those proposed by the Local Government Association in 2004, that would form the basis for each Authority's school calendars.
- 4.4 In September 2007 a set of principles were agreed by Yorkshire and Northumberland Authorities. The principles are not binding but received unanimous support. It was agreed that the priority should be to agree on key dates such as half terms, Christmas and Easter. A greater degree of flexibility was agreed for the start and end of terms where individual schools may set training days.
- 4.5 It was accepted that there may be occasions where the agreed principles cannot always be implemented. By applying these principles wherever possible however it is hoped that the interests of all stakeholders can be met. A copy of the principles is attached at **Appendix A**.

5. Key Considerations for 2015/16

- 5.1 The starting position when setting the school calendar is to consider that recommended by the Local Government Association. The proposed Sheffield calendar for 2015/16 is in line with that recommended by the LGA.
- 5.2 The proposed calendar satisfies the following criteria established under the Regional Principles:
- Wherever possible, in any academic year, terms should be of equal length and split weeks avoided or kept to a minimum. Where there are an odd number of weeks the second half term should be the shorter of the two. The proposed calendar for 2015/16 complies with this requirement.
 - The Autumn half term break will normally be the five days which are the last period Monday to Friday in October. According to the year, October half term can start as early as Monday 21 and as late as Monday 27 October.

For the 2015/16 calendar the October half term break is Monday 26 October to Friday 30 October. This gives half terms of 8 and 7 weeks respectively in the Autumn term.

- The Christmas break will include at least 10 school days, and will normally start at the end of the school day on the Friday which is on, or otherwise immediately prior to, 22 December. It will include the New Year's day holiday which is outside that period, and the day after New Years Day, where this is a weekday.

In this and previous consultations School responses have indicated strongly that a full two week break at Christmas is the preferred option. The proposed calendar provides this.

- The February half term holiday will be five days Monday to Friday, which divides the term as far as possible into two equal parts. Where there is an odd number of weeks the second half term will be the shorter of the two.

The proposed February half term commences Monday 8 February giving a 5 week first half term and a 5 week term up to Easter.

- The Spring Term will normally end at the close of the afternoon session on the Friday before Good Friday. The holiday will be 10 school days.

The 2015/16 calendar actually proposes that the final day of term will be 18 March, the Friday before Good Friday on 25 April.

6. Neighbouring Authorities

- 6.1 All the main holiday will be the same for the 2014/15 academic year with the exception of February half term and Easter when Derbyshire has set different dates to the South Yorkshire Authorities.

	February Half Term 2016
Barnsley	8 – 12 February
Doncaster	8 – 12 February
Rotherham	8 – 12 February
Sheffield	8 – 12 February
Derbyshire	15 – 19 February

	Easter 2016
Barnsley	21 March – 1 April
Doncaster	21 March – 1 April
Rotherham	21 March – 1 April
Sheffield	21 March – 1 April
Derbyshire	25 March – 8 April

7. Religious Observance

- 7.1 The Authority wishes to ensure that periods of religious observance can be observed within the approved school year. All schools must provide 190 teaching days and 5 development days. Within the school calendar

however there may be flexibility to enable schools to observe religious observance both for pupils and staff.

The Executive Director and Lead Cabinet Member are keen to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility within the school calendar to accommodate religious observance and are keen to receive your comments on how such arrangements may be accommodated. To help facilitate this, a model policy for Religious Observance was circulated with the school calendar consultation documentation and responses were invited. The model policy is attached at **Appendix B**.

A number of schools already have arrangements in place to accommodate religious observance. There were no responses received to this specific issue.

8. Responses Received to Consultation

- 8.1 Formal consultation on the proposed calendar took place between 24 January and 8 March 2014.
- 8.2 There was a low response to the consultation process. Consultation took place with all schools, Unions, Elected Members and key partners.
- 8.3 The Headlines from the consultation process are that responses were received from 5 Schools (7% of the total) of which 1 was from a Primary School, 3 from Secondary Schools and 1 from a Special School. There were no responses received from other bodies.
- 8.4 The primary school response was supportive of the proposed dates, as were 2 of the 3 Secondary School responses and the response from the Special School.
- 8.5 One Secondary School is a Voluntary Aided School and supports the Derbyshire proposal for the Easter Break as it means that the school would be closed for Holy week (w/c 4 April). A Voluntary Aided School is free to set its own term dates.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The legal implications are set out in this report and there are no other implications to consider.

10. Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 Following the consultation, it was clear that there was a desire to consolidate term dates with all local Authorities but especially Derbyshire and Rotherham.
- 10.2 If the Authority set the same calendar as Derbyshire, it would mean that Sheffield would operate different term dates at February half term and Easter to those operated in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. Having considered the term dates proposed by Authorities across Yorkshire and Northumberland the majority actually concur with the calendar

recommended by the Local Government Association. This is the recommendation on which all neighbouring Authorities have based their calendars.

- 10.3 Whilst it is disappointing that full agreement could not be reached with Derbyshire, the proposed calendar does correspond with all other South Yorkshire Authorities and with all but the February half term in Derbyshire.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are requested to approve:
- (i) The School Calendar as presented at **Appendix C** for the 2015/16 Academic Year. This is the same model that has been agreed by Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Authorities.
 - (ii) Transition dates for the primary to secondary for Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 July 2015.
 - (iii) That schools traditionally used as Polling Stations for local elections be asked to designate the first Thursday in May as a Training Day.

Appendix A

School Calendar - Guiding Principles for Yorkshire Region

- 1.0 The 12 Yorkshire Authorities listed will work together to establish common school holiday dates each year:

Barnsley	Leeds
Bradford	North Yorkshire
Calderdale	Rotherham
Doncaster	Sheffield
East Yorkshire	Wakefield
Kirklees	York

- 2.0 The school year will consist of 195 school days. Pupils must attend on 190 of those days.

- 3.0 The starting point for consideration of each year's holiday pattern will be the pattern recommended by the LGA for that school year modified as per these principles.

- 4.0 Wherever possible, in any academic year, terms should be of equal length and split weeks avoided or kept to a minimum. Where there are an odd number of weeks the second half term should be the shorter of the two.

5.0 **Start of the School Year**

The school year will normally start on the first day of September.

6.0 **Autumn Half Term**

The Autumn half term break will be the five days which are the last period Monday to Friday in October. According to the year, October half term can start as early as Monday 21 and as late as Monday 27 October.

7.0 **Christmas Break**

The Christmas break will include at least 10 school days, and will normally start at the end of the school day on the Friday which is on, or otherwise immediately prior to, 22 December. It will include the New Year's day holiday which is outside that period, and the day after New Years Day, where this is a weekday.

8.0 **February Half Term**

The February half term holiday will be five days Monday to Friday, which divides the term as far as possible into two equal parts. Where there are an odd number of weeks the second half term will be the shorter of the two.

9.0 **Easter Break**

The Spring Term will normally end at the close of the afternoon session on the Friday before Good Friday. The holiday will be 10 school days.

Where the LGA recommended patterns would result in a break between the Easter bank holidays and the school Easter holiday, consideration will be given to modifying Easter to incorporate the bank holidays in the school holiday. The Easter bank holidays could be at the start (with the Spring Term ending at the close of the afternoon session on the Thursday before Good Friday), middle, or end of the school Easter break, but never outside of the break itself.

10.0 Spring Bank Half Term

The Spring Bank half term will be five days Monday to Friday from the statutory holiday which falls as the last Monday in May.

11.0 End of the School Year

Taking into account the above pattern, term will end on the date which achieves 195 school days of which five days shall be declared as training days. The term will normally end on the third Friday in July.

The summer break will not be less than five weeks and preferably not less than six weeks.

12.0 Exceptions

Some LEAs (such as Bradford and Calderdale) have historically provided for a number of occasional (training) days within the schedule. These days allow schools to be responsive to their respective community needs. The schedule normally provides for between 3 – 5 occasional days which are found by reducing the half terms to three days in length.

13.0 Polling Day

In nominating the five training days, governing bodies must accommodate the use of the school as a polling station, where needed. Where schools close on polling day governing bodies should use this as a training day.



Framework for Religious Observance within the statutory School Calendar

Background

This briefing note is intended to provide schools with the flexibility to recognize and observe religious festivals other than those recognised within the school calendar where large numbers of parents, pupils and staff wish to take time off school whilst providing the full statutory number of days education. This guidance is not intended to be prescriptive and enables schools to consider their own circumstances. There are however specific statutory requirements that must be delivered.

When considering whether to close the school for religious observance the school must make a balanced assessment of the potential impact on the whole school population, especially for those pupils and parents that may not be of the religion for which the festival is relevant.

The School Calendar

The City Council sets the school calendar for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. Schools that are their own Admission Authority are free to set their own calendar.

All schools must provide 190 days education in the school year. In addition there are also 5 professional development days which schools can schedule as full days or disaggregate them to twilight sessions.

The Calendar that is agreed by the Local Authority ensures that there are 190 teaching days in the school year.

Exceptions to the Published School Calendar

If any school wishes to close for religious observance on a day that is identified as a normal school day it must ensure that the following actions are carried out:

1. Parents and staff are fully consulted in good time in case alternative child care arrangements have to be made.
2. If any day or days that the school is closed for religious observance are not taken as professional development days, they must be made up elsewhere in the school calendar to ensure that 190 teaching days are provided.
3. If any day or days that the school is closed for religious observance are taken as professional development days, this time must be made up to ensure that the 5 days requirement is met.
4. Time off arrangements for both teaching and support staff in the school are granted fairly in accordance with the school's policy for granting time off for religious observance. Please refer to the model policy available from the Schools Human Resources Team.

Children, Young People and Families Service

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

For community and voluntary controlled primary, secondary and special schools

September (22 Days)							October (17 Days)							November (21 Days)						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	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
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30						
December (14 Days)							January (20 days)							February (16 days)						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29						
March (14 Days)							April (20 Days)							May (19 Days)						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
														30	31					
June (19 Days)							July (13 Days)							August						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

Denotes Bank Holidays

Denotes School Holidays

195 days – including 5 days to be taken as professional development days for teaching staff

1 September – 23 October	39 days
2 November – 18 December	35 days
	74 days
4 January – 5 February	25 days
15 February – 18 March	25 days
	50 days
4 April – 27 May	39 days
6 June – 19 July	32 days
	71 days
Total	195 days