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Report of: *John Macilwraith, Executive Director, People Services*

Report to: *Councillor Abtisam Mohamed, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills*

Date of Decision: *14 May 2020*

Subject: *School Term Dates and Holidays 2021/22*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Education & Skills</i>		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Children, Young People & Family Support</i>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(EIA 786)</i>		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		

Purpose of Report:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2021/22 Academic year for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Education & Skills is recommended to approve –

- (i) The School calendar for the 2021/22 academic year. (Appendix A)

Background Papers:

Proposed School calendar – Fixed Easter (Appendix A)

Summary of consultation responses (Appendix B)

Provision for religious observance (Appendix C)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Liz Gough
	Legal: Nadine Wynter
	Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>John Macilwraith, Executive Director, People Services</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted: <i>Cllr. Abtisam Mohamed, Education & Skills</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>John Bigley</i>
	Job Title: <i>Manager, Admissions & Access, Inclusion & Learning Services</i>
Date: 4 May 2020	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Local Authority is required to consult annually and determine the school term dates for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Consistent 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.
- 1.4 The school year must contain 190 teaching days and 5 additional teacher training days. Any Governing Body wishing to determine its own term dates must adhere to this requirement.
- 1.5 There are many issues that are important to a wide range of stakeholders when considering the school calendar. These include the cost of family holidays, the length of some of the terms and the impact of operating a different calendar to neighbouring Authorities on child care arrangements.
- 1.6 The Council is keen to obtain views from all stakeholders on the school calendar, especially from schools, parents and young people. An extensive consultation took place during the Spring Term 2016 for the 2017/18 academic year with parents, school leaders and other stakeholders. The Authority consulted on two models as follows:

Option 1 – The traditional model

The traditional model has a one week half term break at October, February and May and a six week summer break. The Easter break has traditionally The Spring Term usually ended at the end of the school day on the Friday before Good Friday. Incorporating the bank holidays.

Option 2 – Fixing the Easter Break

Easter Day falls on the Sunday following the first full moon after the first day of Spring, 21 March. This means that Easter can be as early as 22 March or as late as 25 April. If the Easter Break falls in late April this creates a long half term and impacts on Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) preparation, not least because there is also the May Day bank holiday. All schools consulted with supported the idea of fixing the Easter Break at the first two weeks of April, irrespective of where the actual Bank Holiday falls. This would allow for more even Spring Terms and also provide a minimum of 3 weeks preparation time for SATS which all schools were supportive of.

- 1.7 A City wide consultation took place with parents, schools and stakeholders for the 2017/18 calendar. There were 1200 responses received. **71%** of those responding preferred the fixed Easter model.
- 1.8 A school calendar was agreed for 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 that fixed the Easter break at the first two weeks in April.
- 1.9 The same model is proposed for 2021/22.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 Thriving neighbourhoods and communities

A common school calendar supports families with primary and secondary aged children and reduces the need for children to be taken out of school during term time for the purposes of holidays. A common school calendar across the City supports teachers and non-teaching staff.

2.2 As an in touch organisation

The school calendar can impact on communities in different ways, both in Sheffield and with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority has consulted widely with all stakeholders and wants to hear the views of all stakeholders to arrive at the most effective and consistent school calendar. A number of responses have been received outlining the difficulties faced by families where parents work in different Authorities to where their children attend school, equally there have been the same number of responses supporting the fixing of the Easter break.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Authority carried out a consultation process for the 2021/22 school calendar from 3 February 2020 to 13 March 2020.

Consultation took place with:

- All Headteachers
- Chairs of Governors
- Parents (via schools and the Council Website)
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Teaching and non-teaching Trade Unions
- Other stakeholders

The proposed calendar was also posted on the City Council Website.

In response to the proposed calendar for 2021/22, 14 responses were received from the following:

	Primary Schools	Parents	Total
In Support	7	3	10
Against	1	3	4

Responses are provided in full at **Appendix B**.

As with the consultation for the 2020/21 calendar (11), there have been very few responses received to the proposed calendar. Direct communication was sent to Headteachers and Governors to highlight the consultation for 2021/22. Responses are pro-actively sought. The fact that there are only a small number of responses received is indicative that the majority of consultees are happy with the proposed calendar.

- 3.2 Neighbouring Authorities have also been consulting on both the traditional model and the fixed Easter Model. School calendars have been determined as follows:

	October half term	Christmas	February half term	Easter	Spring Bank half term
Barnsley	25-29 October	20 Dec – 3 January	21 – 25 February	11 – 22 April	30 May – 3 June
Derbyshire	25-29 October	20 Dec – 3 January	21 – 25 February	11 – 22 April	30 May – 3 June
Doncaster	Not determined				
Rotherham	Not determined				
Sheffield	25 – 29 October	20 Dec – 3 January	14 – 18 February	4 – 18 April	30 May – 3 June

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. The report makes provision for schools to make arrangement for religious observance in order to respond to different community requirements. **(Appendix C)**

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications to this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The only legal implication for the Authority is the failure to set a calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 In response to the overwhelming support for fixing the Easter Break during the 2017/18 consultation process the Authority has only consulted on this single model for 2021/22.

6. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that **Appendix A** be approved as the model school calendar for the 2021/22 academic year. This model fixes Easter at the first two weeks in April (commencing Monday 4 April). The calendar applies to all Community schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools, Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools. Voluntary Aided Schools, Trusts and Academies that are their own Admission Authority are recommended to adopt the model calendar to promote consistency across the City.

It is likely that Church Aided Schools will have their Easter Break around the religious festival. This has always been the case and Aided Schools will continue to set their own dates at Easter.

- 6.2 There was overwhelming support for fixing the Easter break at the beginning of April when the proposal was first consulted upon for the 2017/18 school calendar. It is accepted that there are many different views and opinions on the school calendar. The purpose of the consultation was to invite opinion and comment from all stakeholders. There have not been many responses to the proposed calendar, nor has there been any strong opposition to the proposed calendar for 2021/22 which indicates that the support expressed under last year's consultation continues.