



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: John Bigley,
Manager, Admissions & Access, Access &
Inclusion

Tel: 0114 2734097

Report of: *Meredith Teasdale-Dixon, Strategic Director of Children's Services*
Report to: *Education, Children & Families Policy Committee*
Date of Decision: 19 March 2024
Subject: School Calendar 2025/26

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA	2500	
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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:-		
<p><i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2025/26 Academic year for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to approve:

The School calendar for the 2025/26 academic year. (Appendix A)

Background Papers:

Proposed School calendar – (Appendix A)

Provision for religious observance (Appendix B)

Consultation responses (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.
	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
	Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	Climate: <i>(N/A)</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	SLB member who approved submission: <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted: <i>Cllr. Dawn Dale</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 Committee by the SLB 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</i>
	Date: <i>19 March 2024</i>

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. Schools that are their own Admission Authority are free to determine their own school calendar but most follow the Council model.
- 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 has been 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 childcare arrangements.
- 1.6 Whilst the Local Authority aims to consolidate its Calendar with neighbouring Authorities this is not always possible. When setting its calendar, the Authority does adhere where possible to a set of principles that have been established across Yorkshire and Humberside Authorities.
- 1.7 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.

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. The Council has operated a “fixed Easter” Calendar each year since 2018. Effectively this means that the Easter break takes place over the first two weeks of April. The Council has agreed a Fixed Easter school calendar every year since

2017/18. The Easter Bank Holidays in 2026 actually fall on 3rd and 6th April which fit with the proposal to fix Easter in the first two weeks in April.

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 : and with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority has consulted widely stakeholders and wants to hear the views of all stakeholders to arrive at an effective and consistent school calendar.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 The Authority carried out a consultation process for the 2025/26 school calendar from 8 January to 23 February 2024.

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.

3.2 In response to the proposed calendar for 2025/26, 2 responses were received from the following:

	Primary	Secondary	Other	Total
In Support	0	2	0	2
Against	0	0	0	0

Responses to the consultation are provided at **Appendix C**

3.3 As with the consultation for the 2024/25 calendar (4), there have been very few responses received to the proposed calendar. The Authority is keen to hear from all stakeholders on the school calendar. Direct communication was sent to Headteachers and Governors by the Director of Children's Services on 8 January 2024 to highlight the consultation for 2025/26. All schools are asked to signpost parents to

the consultation. The consultation was also placed on the Council's website. 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.

3.4 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
Sheffield	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Derbyshire	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Doncaster	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Rotherham	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Barnsley	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights provision for schools to make arrangement for religious observance in order to respond to different community requirements. **(Appendix B)**

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 Failure to set a calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools would breach the statutory duty set out in section 32 of the Education Act 2002, as amended. There are no other legal implications.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no climate implications to this report.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 In response to the overwhelming support for fixing the Easter Break during the 2017/18 consultation process and in subsequent years the Authority has only consulted on this single model for 2025/26.

6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that **Appendix A** be approved as the model school calendar for the 2025/26 academic year. 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.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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 2025/26 which indicates that the support expressed under last year's consultation continues.