



PAPER A

Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S
Date	8 MARCH 2018
Title	DETERMINE ACADEMIC YEAR/TERM DATES FOR 2019 - 2020
Report to	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is for the Cabinet to determine the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2019/2020.

The recommendation is to agree the proposed school term dates for 2019-2020, to provide a consistent and appropriate term date calendar for schools across the Isle of Wight. The proposal has been reached following extensive consultation with stakeholders. It provides a departure from previous models and can shape future patterns of school years on the Island.

BACKGROUND

2. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The structure for delivering this entitlement has been the subject of national and local debate in recent years.

The Local Government Association (LGA) National Standing Committee on the School Year has, in the past, been active in seeking to establish a national school year but this process has now ended. The council made clear its intention to consult on changes to the school year that went beyond the typical modification of start and end dates for the terms with Christmas and Easter breaks placed around the bank holidays that apply to the religious festivals. In particular a two week half term break was to be explored.

Establishing balanced term lengths with regular breaks supports an aim of the corporate strategy, to maximising wellbeing, by helping schools and families to plan learning more effectively. Children benefit from good attendance in school; in particular it supports educational achievement and lays the foundation for a positive contribution to society and economic well-being. Properly structured periods of learning and rest help children to remain

healthy, enjoy their school time and achieve more. The publication of dates well in advance enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3. Raising educational achievement is a priority of the council as set out in the council's Corporate Plan. The standardisation of dates helps all schools to plan effectively.
4. The Isle of Wight Council can, in response to this consultation, set the school year for 2019/20. In future years when setting the pattern of term and holiday dates the Council may refer to some outcomes from this consultation to guide the elements of any proposed school year.

CONSULTATION

5. A consultation opened on 24 November 2017 and closed on 16 January 2018. Headteacher conference and unions were referred to the consultation. There were 1877 responses. Respondents were able to choose categories of parent, other Isle of Wight residents, and schools and colleges. They were able to select more than one category or leave any response blank. The breakdown of the separate categories of respondents is as follows:

Voluntary controlled or community school	210
Other school or college	335
Isle of Wight resident	194
Representative of Isle of Wight business community	27
Pupil	94
Parent/carer of a pre-school child	229
Parent/carer of a primary school child	938
Parent/carer of a secondary school child	503
Parent/carer of a post-16 aged child	120

The Isle of Wight Council sets the school year for voluntary controlled and community schools. Other categories of schools, e.g. academies are able to set their own school year. Those schools that can set their own school year have suggested that they will use the Isle of Wight Council school year as the basis for their determination.

Responses from those holding a role in a school advised that 282 were from teachers, 56 from a Senior Leader, 19 from a Governor and 225 from other staff members.

6. The consultation asked if respondents would like to maintain the current pattern of term dates.

Would you prefer that current arrangements regarding school holiday timetables are maintained?	
Yes 623	No 866

7. The consultation also asked if respondents were in favour of the ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL reducing the summer holiday and providing for a two week half term holiday in either the autumn term or the spring term. It went further and asked if respondents would support a further reduction in the summer to allow for a two week half term in both the spring and autumn terms. The table below shows the support for and against establishing a two week half term, for establishing it in the autumn term and similarly for the spring term.

Do you agree with shortening the school summer holidays to establish a two week half term break?	
Yes 926	No 632
If the Isle of Wight Council were to reduce the summer break and create a two week half term holiday; where in your view is the best time for the two week holiday?	
Autumn term (late October) 943	Spring term (late February) 461
Do you agree with shortening the school summer holidays to establish two, two week half term breaks; one in autumn and one in spring?	
Yes 573	No 951

8. The responses show support for changing the current pattern of term dates by shortening the summer holiday and introducing a two week half term break in October. The data allows us to see that 38 responses were from a senior leader or governor in a school that is able to set its own school year; 26 of those responses supported the approach of reducing the summer break and having a two week half term. The consultation responses do not support introducing two longer half term breaks. Appendix 2 provides the proportions of responses by individual categories.
9. Respondents were asked if they prefer that the school Easter break includes the Easter weekend.

Do you prefer that the school Easter Break includes the Easter Weekend?		
Yes 593	No 236	Don't mind 691

The consultation responses do not support routinely decoupling the religious Easter weekend from the two week Easter break between the spring and summer terms. However most families do not mind or don't want the Easter break to include the Easter weekend; this is supportive of, in a future year, the authority proposing for consultation a pattern where Easter weekend sits outside the Easter school holiday. The proposed school year for 2019/20 includes an Easter break that includes the Easter weekend.

10. The response from the National Union of Teachers is provided in Appendix 3. The points raised by the union have been given a number to facilitate a response. Point 1 suggests a need for additional information regarding

attendance patterns; the ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL has not suggested that the purpose of the alteration to the school year is to address attendance issues. Point 2 refers to the lack of evidence supporting 'learning loss' occurring in the UK. There are recent articles that refer to proven learning loss in the UK's 6 week summer holiday (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5635200/>) although it is true that greater evidence exists for learning loss in the United States 12 week summer holiday. Point 3 refers to a loss of school days for Year 11 students. If we consider the whole five years in school students will, as they do now, receive years 7 to 10 in the secondary phase with 38 weeks of learning. In year 11 they might have fewer weeks in the new pattern if the particular arrangement has a long final summer half term.

The final half term in 2019/20 is proposed as seven weeks. In the last three determined school years there were also seven weeks in the final half term. Therefore over five school years the same numbers of school weeks are available. Two further points, including an alternative model based on the approach in Scotland are suggested.

11. There were many comments collected while carrying out this consultation. They have been grouped based on whether they supported or opposed the particular question and compiled and made available to Members.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no financial implications from this report. School dates are a statutory requirement.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The council is required, under section 32 of the Education Act 2002, to set school term and holiday dates for community, voluntary-controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained schools.
14. In respect of foundation, voluntary aided or foundation special schools it is the governing body which determines the school terms and holidays start and finish dates.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

15. The proposed calendar for 2019/20 term dates applies to all community, voluntary-controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained schools on the Island. This excludes academies and free schools (including the Isle of Wight Studio school) which are free to set their own term dates. The proposed calendar is applied across all of our schools in the same way and therefore does not have any impact of any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

16. Responses to the consultation are supportive of a change from the current pattern and there is majority support for the reduction in the summer holiday and creating a two week autumn half term. However there is not majority support for further reduction and a two week half term holiday in both the spring and autumn term. This support allows the school year in Appendix 1 to be proposed for 2019/20.
17. There has been careful consideration to the proposed calendar 2019-20. The majority of neighbouring authorities will be consulting, or have consulted, on a calendar that does not consider a longer half term break. The Isle of Wight does not have any land boundaries although a small number of children do attend school or college beyond the Island. It is hoped that all schools with responsibility for setting their own school year will use the proposed arrangement as the basis for their year and that across all the Island's providers there will be consistent holiday dates.

Option 1: To approve the proposed calendar for term dates 2019/20

Option 2: To not approve the proposed calendar for term dates 2019/20 and agree a different calendar.

RISK MANAGEMENT

18. It is a requirement for the local authority to set school term and holiday dates for all its maintained schools, other than voluntary aided and foundation schools, to whom the dates are recommended. If the council fails to agree term dates for 2019-20 it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002.

EVALUATION

19. The proposed calendar has been subject to appropriate consultation with all stakeholders. The consultation received a large number of responses and there is support within the responses to enable a way forward that trials this variation to the more typical pattern. In future years the Council is required to consult on its school year and this can be done with the experience of this changed model.

Having considered the above, it is felt that the option in Appendix 1 is the most suitable.

RECOMMENDATION

20. To approve the proposed calendar for term dates 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

21. [Appendix 1](#): Draft calendar of term dates for 2019/20
[Appendix 2](#): Analysis of responses

[Appendix 3](#): Response from NUT.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. [Term Time Consultation Responses](#)

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