



Cabinet report

Date	12 MAY 2022
Title	DETERMINE ACADEMIC YEAR/TERM DATES FOR 2023/2024
Report of	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND LIFELONG SKILLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval from the Cabinet on the determination of the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2023/2024 and to note the outcomes of the consultation process that has been followed.
2. Following a public consultation for the 2019/2020 school year, the Isle of Wight Council introduced a two-week October half term break and used the same approach in the following school year. During the two school years that followed, the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected schools' delivery of, and pupils' attendance at lessons.
3. When setting the school year for 2022/2023, a one-week half term was re-introduced. In Spring 2022, the Council carried out a further consultation with all stakeholders on views of the two-week October half term break. Specifically, respondents were asked to state their preferred length of that break, choosing between three options. After responses had been analysed schools and professional bodies were asked for comments on proposed term and holiday dates which had been designed using the public consultation response that preferred a two-week October half term break.

RECOMMENDATION

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| 4. That the proposed calendar for term dates 2023/2024 as in Appendix 3 to be approved. |
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BACKGROUND

5. 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. Across England, in local authorities and in schools with responsibility for setting their own school year, there are an increasing number of schools that do not use the typical school year of three terms, with one-week half term breaks and a long summer holiday of up to six weeks. A two-week October half term break, and a correspondingly shorter summer holiday, is becoming more common.

6. Having a balanced school year with regular breaks in the middle and at the end of each term helps to maximise wellbeing, and helps schools to plan learning more effectively.
7. 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.
8. The proposed pattern for term and holiday dates on the Isle of Wight takes account of the last day of term in July 2023 and then provides the best available balanced half terms and holiday periods. There has been agreement with Island schools that one of the non-teaching days is taken on the first day of the autumn term, the remaining four are determined and allocated by the school as they wish.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9. The recommendation in this report links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision. Also raising educational achievement is a priority of the Council as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. The standardisation of dates as much as possible across schools helps them to plan effectively and supports good attendance.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

10. The school year plans the term and holiday dates calendar; it has no links to climate change.

Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty

11. The school year plans the term and holiday dates calendar. The public consultation on the school year explored the links between the school year and the Island's businesses. The responses received state that the configuration of the school year does have an impact on aspects of business and families' access to holidays.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

12. The decisions the Council makes now not only affect current residents, but may have long term impacts, both positive and negative, on young people and future generations. These impacts may not immediately be apparent or may not emerge for a number of years or decades. Impacts will be interrelated across the various domains of young people's lives from housing, employment or training, health and the environment.
13. The consultation process invited children, young people and their families to respond and as can be seen many did provide their views. These views have been taken into account in the recommendation in this paper.

Corporate Aims

14. The recommendation in this report directly links to the Corporate Plan 2021-25 priority which is to work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision.

CONSULTATION

15. The Isle of Wight Council public consultation on the 2023/2024 School Year ran from 4 February 2022 to 23 March 2022. 3,257 responses were received, broken down as follows:

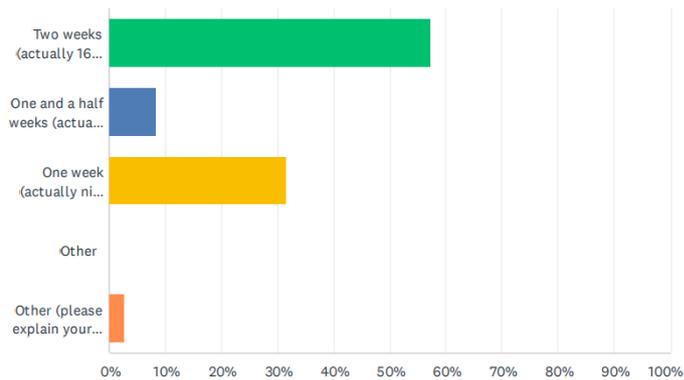
Respondent	Count
Local resident	147
Other (please specify)	260
Parent/care of a child aged over 16	61
Parent/carer of a secondary aged child	641
Parent/carer of primary aged child	1,616
Pupil	127
Representative of a voluntary controlled or community school	151
Representative of other school or college	239
Representative of the business community	14
(blank)	1
Grand Total	3,257

Analysing responses from those selecting 'Other' there are 79 parents with children in two or more school age groups (including seven parents of pre-school age children), 64 teachers, 42 employed in a school, 31 other relatives such as grandparents, 20 who are both a parent and teacher, and 10 Early Years professionals. Their responses have been included in the stratified analysis in paragraph 19.

16. More detailed analysis is included below and in Appendix 1. The majority of respondents supported a two-week October half term break. The majority of respondents from schools also supported a two-week October half term break.

Q3 Would you prefer a two, one and half or one week school holiday during autumn (October) half term?

Answered: 3,176 Skipped: 81



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Two weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	57.30% 1,820
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two weekends)	8.41% 267
One week (actually nine days including two weekends)	31.55% 1,002
Other	0.00% 0
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	2.74% 87
TOTAL	3,176

17. The responses were analysed following the closure of the consultation. A proposal of term and holiday dates was sent to schools and the professional bodies for their comments. The responses from schools and professional bodies are included in Appendix2.
18. There were a number of responses in this second consultation with stakeholders, regarding the two-week October half term break. In total 10 were received from the 48 schools and two other responses came the Island Learning Centre and the Isle of Wight College. Five of the comments supported the two-week half term break and others made comments in support of retaining a one-week break. 39 schools did not comment.
19. The following comments in the appendix merit responses as below;
 - Some comments start from the premise that there may be a four-week summer holiday in 2024, However, that won't be the case, the first day back in September 2024 has not yet been decided. That will be concluded when setting the next school year. Five weeks can be achieved.
 - Year 11s lose 25 hours during their final years learning if there is a two-week October half term break. Year 11 students will have been attending their secondary school for approximately 180 weeks (~4,500 hours) by the time of the summer half term in Year 11. The shorter Year 11 can be offset during the time spent in secondary school.
 - Can May half term break be moved to first week of June? This break is fixed by public exam timetables and the May second bank holiday and cannot be moved into June.
 - One academy that sets its own school year has said they will not adopt a school year with a two-week October half term break. The Council hopes that families with children attending more than one school will encounter the same school year at each school.

ANALYSIS

20. The majority (57.3 percent) of respondents have indicated they prefer a two-week October half term holiday. More granular analysis of the two main stakeholder groups (parents and staff in schools) is set out in the tables below:

Data for parents	
Labels	Count
Other 'parents'	133
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	12
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	33
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	8
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	80
Parent/care of a child aged over 16	57
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	4
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	25
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	1
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	27
Parent/carer of a secondary aged child	632
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	46
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	235
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	18
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	333
Parent/carer of primary aged child	1569
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	107
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	450
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	35
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	977
Data for those representing schools.	
Labels	Count
Other 'school representative'	107
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	12
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	31
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	4
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	60
Representative of a voluntary controlled or community school	148
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	20
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	46
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	9
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	73
Representative of other school or college	238
One and a half weeks (actually 12 days including two-weekends)	39
One-week (actually nine days including two-weekends)	63
Other (please explain your reasons for this choice)	5
Two-weeks (actually 16 days including three weekends)	131

Among parents, 59 percent have voted for a two-week half term, and among school representatives the figure is 53.5 percent. The equivalent figures voting for one-week (the next preferred option) are 31percent and 28.4 percent. In all but two groups, the number preferring a two-week October half term break exceeds the total voting for the other options.

21. With a clear majority within the survey, both overall and within stratified analysis, the model of school holiday and term dates included in Appendix 3 is recommended.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. The school year decides the term and holiday dates calendar; it has no budget implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

23. Under section 32 Education Act 2002, the local authority shall determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled or community special schools.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

24. The proposed calendar for 2022/2023 term dates applies to all community, voluntary controlled schools, community special schools. Other local authority maintained schools on the Island routinely utilise the determined calendar. Academies and Free Schools are free to set their own term dates. The proposed calendar is applied across all schools using it in the same way and therefore does not have any impact on any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

25. Option 1 - To approve the proposed calendar for the term dates 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 3.

Option 2 - To approve an alternative calendar to that set out in Appendix 3.

26. Other options considered have included;
 - i) the more typical one-week October half term holiday and seeking to establish a school year that includes two-weeks and three weekends in the Christmas holiday whenever possible,
 - ii) a 'hybrid' with more than twelve days break holiday in October half term break.

RISK MANAGEMENT

27. 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, it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002.

EVALUATION

28. The proposed calendar has been carefully considered in light of the change that

applied for 2019/2020 and has continued. Having considered the above, it is felt that the option in Appendix 3 is the most suitable.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix 1: Analysis of public consultation

Appendix 2: Comments from stakeholders on the proposed pattern of term and holiday dates with a two-week October half term break.

Appendix 3: Recommended school year including a two-week October half term break.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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