

Decision to be made by the Portfolio Holder Education and Learning on or after 19 June 2015

School Term and Holiday Dates 2016/17

Recommendation:

That the Portfolio Holder Education and Learning approves the school term and holiday dates for the 2016/17 academic year as set out in the appendices to this report.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The Local Authority (LA) is currently responsible for setting school term and holiday dates for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Academies, Foundation and Aided Schools are responsible for setting their own term dates. Academies, Foundation and Aided schools have generally followed the Local Authority's pattern of terms and holiday dates.
- 1.2 The Deregulation Bill, which includes the removal of the LA responsibility for setting terms and holidays for Community and Controlled schools, received Royal Assent at the end of March 2015. Under Section 66(3) and Schedule 16 of the Act, LAs will only be able to recommend a schedule of terms and holidays. However, there has been not statutory instrument published to bring this item onto force so there is, as yet, no date for this to be brought in.
- 1.3 A number of 'guiding principles' have traditionally been used to set the pattern of terms and holidays and every effort is always made to adhere to as many of the following as possible:
1. 195 days from which the five teacher days are taken;
 2. Two of the five days defined by the local authority, one at the start of the autumn and spring terms; the other three to be set by schools;
 3. Complete weeks wherever possible;
 4. A three weekend break at Christmas and Easter;
 5. A summer break as close to six weeks as possible;
 6. A pattern which is as consistent as possible with neighbouring authorities.
- 1.4 In devising the options discussions were carried out with neighbouring authorities. There is agreement on the dates for each of the half term holidays and the Christmas and Easter breaks. Other authorities have proposed slightly different start and end dates for the summer break which have been included in the two options circulated for consultation.

1.5 Between 13 March 2015 and 1 May 2015 a consultation exercise was carried out with trades unions and schools for the 2016/17 academic year. (**Appendix 1**)

1.6 The two options put forward for consideration were:

Option 1 (Appendix 2) was officers' preferred option because it meets most of the principles set out above. It is consistent with one of the options put forward by Coventry LA. This option also has the strong support of the professional associations.

In this option Thursday and Friday of the August Bank Holiday week are teacher days, rather than having a designated teacher day at the beginning of the Spring Term. However it is possible for those days to be used flexibly so that staff do not have to attend school on those days in return for a commitment to undertake activities at other times. This has occurred in the past when the following conditions were drawn up in consultation with the teacher associations and trade unions to ensure that contractual obligations are not compromised:

- The head teacher and governing body must agree to the flexible use of the days.
- If individual teachers are to be given flexibility, each individual must agree to the flexible use of the days. For the whole school to be closed, a majority of teachers must agree.
- Subject to the above, in return for not attending schools on the teacher days, teachers must agree to undertake other activities for an equivalent length of time, such as twilight sessions on other days or other agreed activities.
- The Thursday of the Bank holiday week remains the first day of the school year for contractual and pay purposes, whether or not staff actually attend.

The professional associations are happy to give schools guidance and support on this point.

Option 2 (Appendix 3) has the start of the Autumn term as 5 September 2016 for staff with pupils returning on Tuesday 6th. It would require schools to remain open until Tuesday 25th July, creating a split week and a long final half term. For these reasons, this option is not recommended.

1.7 Sixteen responses were received, 12 from primary phase schools and 4 from secondary. Thirteen were in favour of Option 1, with 3 primary schools in favour of Option 2.

1.8 It is therefore recommended that Option 1 be adopted for the 2016/17 academic year.

Background papers

None

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Communities Group

Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of
All Warwickshire Schools

All other parties with an interest in School
Term and Holiday Dates

13 April 2015

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Dear Colleague

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES - ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17

For the attention of: All Headteachers, Governing Bodies and other interested parties

Action required: Comments are invited on the proposed calendars for the Academic Year 2016/17 and should be submitted by **Friday 1 May 2015**.

Introduction

The Local Authority is currently responsible for setting school term and holiday dates for all Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. To date, the majority of Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academy schools have followed the same term and holiday dates. This paper contains details of suggested school term and holiday dates for the academic year 2016/17. Included are two suggested calendars and we would like to hear your views. After consideration of the comments received a recommendation will be made to the Portfolio Holder for Education.

Traditional principles used in Warwickshire

A number of 'guiding principles' have traditionally been used to set the pattern of terms and holidays and every effort is always made to adhere to as many of the following as possible:

1. 195 days from which the five teacher days are taken;
2. Two of the five days defined by the local authority, one at the start of the autumn and spring terms; the other three to be set by schools;
3. Complete weeks wherever possible;
4. A three weekend break at Christmas and Easter;
5. A summer break as close to six weeks as possible;
6. A pattern which is as consistent as possible with neighbouring authorities.

In attempting to adhere to the above principles, Warwickshire's calendars have occasionally differed from those set by neighbouring authorities. This has led to criticism from schools as well as parents. To that end, I met with colleagues from the West Midlands Authorities to

secure agreement on the proposal of the term time dates. Comments were also sought from professional associations and Warwickshire's Augmented Teachers' Panel (ATP).

Options for 2016/17

Option 1 (Appendix 1)

Officers from all the West Midlands local authorities agreed the proposed dates for each of the half terms. The majority supported the proposed Christmas and Easter breaks.

This option is officers' preferred option because it meets most of the principles set out above. It is consistent with one of the options put forward by Coventry LA. This option also has the strong support of the professional associations.

In this option Thursday and Friday of the August Bank Holiday week are teacher days, rather than having a designated teacher day at the beginning of the Spring Term. However it is possible for those days to be used flexibly so that staff do not have to attend school on those days in return for a commitment to undertake activities at other times. This has occurred in the past when the following conditions were drawn up in consultation with the teacher associations and trade unions to ensure that contractual obligations are not compromised:

- The head teacher and governing body must agree to the flexible use of the days.
- If individual teachers are to be given flexibility, each individual must agree to the flexible use of the days. For the whole school to be closed, a majority of teachers must agree.
- Subject to the above, in return for not attending schools on the teacher days, teachers must agree to undertake other activities for an equivalent length of time, such as twilight sessions on other days or other agreed activities.
- The Thursday of the Bank holiday week remains the first day of the school year for contractual and pay purposes, whether or not staff actually attend.

The professional associations are happy to give schools guidance and support on this point.

Option 2 (Appendix 2)

This option has the start of the Autumn term as 5 September 2016 for staff with pupils returning on Tuesday 6th. It would require schools to remain open until Tuesday 25th July, creating a split week and a long final half term. For these reasons, this option is not recommended.

Next steps

In setting a calendar for the 2016/17 academic year, our aim is to consult as widely as possible. A copy of this report will be made available to the public via the Warwickshire County Council website and schools are encouraged to share the proposals with students and their parents.

Comments on the two suggested calendars are invited. These should be sent to **Hilary Honess, PA to Service Manager, Access & Organisation, Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way, Warwick, CV34 4UL** or hilaryhoness@warwickshire.gov.uk

Comments should be submitted by Friday 1 May 2015.

All comments received will be considered before a recommendation is put forward to the Portfolio Holder for Education for a decision. The calendar for the 2016/17 academic year will then be published in June.

Should you have any questions regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'June Maw', written over a horizontal line.

June Maw
Interim Service Manager, Access and Organisation

Warwickshire School Term and Holiday Dates - 2016/17

DRAFT

M T W T F S S

August 2016						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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September 2016						
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M T W T F S S

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September 2017						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

HalfTerm Days

1	37
2	35
3	34
4	30
5	24
6	35
Total	195

- School Holiday
- Public Holiday
- Teacher Day

Appendix 3

Warwickshire School Term and Holiday Dates - 2016/17

DRAFT

M T W T F S S

August 2016						
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January 2017							1
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February 2017							
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March 2017								
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April 2017								
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July 2017							1	2
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
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HalfTerm Days

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Total	195

- School Holiday
- Public Holiday
- Teacher Day