

# Portfolio Holder Decision

## School Term and Holiday dates 2024/25

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Portfolio Holder</b> | Portfolio Holder for Education  |
| <b>Date of decision</b> | 17 February 2023  |
|                         | <b>Signed</b><br> |

### 1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Education approves the school term and holiday dates for the 2024/25 academic year as set out in the published report.

### 2. Reasons for decisions

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. There is collaboration between the LA and Academies, Foundation and Aided schools which have been invited to comment on the proposed term dates and have generally followed the Local Authority's pattern of terms and holiday dates.

The approval of school term and holiday dates is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Education under the WCC Constitution.

### 3. Background information

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

1. 195 days from which five teacher training days are taken
2. Two of the five teacher training days are defined by the local authority, one of these days is at the start of the autumn and spring terms, the other three to be set by schools
3. Complete weeks when setting holiday dates 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.

A non-statutory consultation exercise ran between the 31<sup>st</sup> October and 9th December 2022; this engagement was carried out with all state-funded schools and academies and their governing bodies.

The term dates of neighbouring authorities can influence the preferences of some schools, mainly those close to authority borders. Where neighbouring authorities had published their term dates for 2024/25, these were included in the consultation information.

The proposed dates for the 2024/25 academic year comprised the calendar as proposed by the West Midlands Regional School Term Date Group as an option for all regional local authorities:

|                 |                   |                                |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Term 1 (Autumn) | Half Term 1       | 02/09/24-25/10/24              |
|                 | Holiday           | 28/10/24-01/11/24              |
|                 | Half Term 2       | 04/11/24-20/12/24              |
|                 | Christmas Holiday | 23/12/24-03/01/25              |
| Term 2 (Spring) | Half Term 1       | 06/01/25-14/02/25              |
|                 | Holiday           | 17/02/25-21/02/25              |
|                 | Half Term 2       | 24/02/25-11/04/25              |
|                 | Easter Holiday    | 14/04/25-25/04/25              |
| Term 3 (Summer) | Half Term 1       | 28/04/25-23/05/25              |
|                 | Holiday           | 26/05/25-30/05/25              |
|                 | Half Term 2       | 02/06/25-21/07/25              |
|                 | Summer Holiday    | 22/07/25-tbd (early Sept 2025) |

Consultees were made aware that these dates have already been adopted by Staffordshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Birmingham authorities. The two Teacher Training days set by the LA were proposed as the first days of each of the first two terms, 2nd September 2024 and 6th January 2025. A universal Secondary School Induction Day was also proposed for 9th July 2025.

In total, 63 responses were received to this informal consultation. 49 (78%) agreed and 14 (22 %) did not agree with the proposed term dates.

Specific comments received from respondents who did not agree with the proposed dates can be summarised as:

| Theme of comment   | No. comments |
|--|--------------|
| “Having Monday 21st July as a school day will be an issue with poor attendance being the result. To mitigate this you might ask schools to consider having an INSET day, but this is an ineffective use of a staff training day. “ | 10           |
| “The length of the terms and half terms are very uneven, with one half term being 8 weeks and another being 4 weeks. I understand that this is determined by how Christmas and Easter fall in the calendar“                        | 6            |

All feedback has been carefully considered.

Having the last day of the academic year as a Monday is unfortunately likely to result in poor pupil attendance (unless the school choose to allocate it as a Teacher Training Day). However, to adhere to providing full weeks wherever possible throughout the rest of the year, while providing the required minimum 195 school days, for this year requires a choice between starting the pupil's school year on a Wednesday (4/9/24) or having the final day of the year on a Monday. It is anticipated that many schools will decide to allocate Monday 21/7/25 as a school-determined Teacher Training Day to avoid low attendance.

The length of the Autumn and Spring terms is largely dictated by when the Christmas and Easter school holidays are set, which is defined by when the bank holidays fall each year. To meet guiding principle 4, of a three-weekend break at Christmas and Easter, as well as providing no fewer than 195 school days in a year, these holidays have to include the bank holidays. Therefore in certain years, terms of unequal lengths will be, unfortunately, unavoidable.

The majority of respondents who expressed a preference agreed with the proposed Secondary School Induction Day Date. However, those that did not agree with the Secondary School Induction Day Date all requested that it be one week earlier, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. After consideration, it is proposed to change the induction date in line with this feedback.

A calendar of these dates is provided in the Background papers.

**It is recommended to adopt the school term dates as shown above and in the calendar provided as a Background Paper.**

**The Secondary Induction Day will be set as Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025.**

#### 4. Financial implications

None

#### 5. Environmental implications

None

#### Report Author

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#### Strategic Director

Strategic Director for People

#### Portfolio Holder

Portfolio Holder for Education

#### Urgent matter?

No

#### Confidential or exempt?

No

**Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?**

No

**List of background papers**

Calendar recommended for approval.

**Members and officers consulted and informed**

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur

Corporate Board – Nigel Minns

Legal – Sarah Cowen

Finance – John Hopper

Equality – Joanna Kemp

Democratic Services – Andy Carswell

Councillors –

Local Member(s): N/A