

Decision Record – School Term Dates 2021/22 Academic Year

Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Education & Learning
Date of decision	21 February 2020
	Signed

Decision taken

Approval of the school term and holiday dates for the 2021/22 academic year as set out in Background Paper 2.

Reasons for decisions

A consultation exercise ran between 26th November to 20th December 2019; this consultation was carried out with all state-funded schools, governing bodies, and union representatives.

The term dates of neighbouring authorities affect the preferences of some schools, mainly those close to authority borders. Where neighbouring authorities had published their term dates for 2021/22, these were included in the consultation information.

Two options for the 2021/22 academic year were put forward for consideration. These two options align closely with two options currently being consulted on by Coventry City Council. Option 1 is based on the calendar as previously proposed by the West Midlands Regional School Term Date Group as an option for all regional local authorities. Option 2 differs by having an earlier October half term holiday.

Option 1:

- Term 1 – 2nd September to 17th December 2021
- Half term holiday 1 – 25th October to 29th October 2021
- Term 2 – 4th January to 8th April 2022
- Half term holiday 2 – 21st February to 25th February 2022
- Term 3 – 25th April to 22nd July 2022
- Half term holiday 3 – 30th May to 3rd June 2022

Consultees were made aware that dates very similar to Option 1 have been adopted by Staffordshire and Birmingham authorities, and are proposed by Solihull, Worcestershire and Oxfordshire authorities. They also form part of the Coventry City Council consultation.

Option 2:

- Term 1 – 31st August to 17th December 2021
- Half term holiday 1 – 18th October to 22nd October 2021
- Term 2 – 4th January to 8th April 2022
- Half term holiday 2 – 21st February to 25th February 2022
- Term 3 – 25th April to 20th July 2022
- Half term holiday 3 – 30th May to 3rd June 2022

Consultees were made aware that Option 2 dates form part of the Coventry City Council consultation.

In both options, the two Teacher Training days set by the LA were proposed as the first days of each of the first two terms, 2nd September/31st August 2021 and 4th January 2022.

A universal School Induction Day was also proposed for 6th July 2022.

Calendars of both options are provided in the Background papers.

In total, 77 responses were received to this consultation.

In summary:

- No preference, 1 (1%)
- Option 1, 74 (96%)
- Option 2, 2 (3%)

Specific comments received can be summarised as:

an eight week half term to Christmas is simply too long

I think both proposals are flawed. As I have stated before, when Christmas is at the weekend, I think Guided Principle 4 is misguided. Breaking up on the 17th December, eight days before Christmas is premature. You have Summer Two breaking up on a Wednesday, so why not Christmas? Break up on Wednesday 22nd December return on Thursday 6th January. Schools decide when they have their Inset day. Proposed Option 1 is slightly better than Option 2.

Option 1:

- better to be aligned with the West Mids - especially for special schools that work with so many authorities
- better to have a shorter second half to the Autumn term, when the community starts to tire
- adding 3rd September to the training day of 2nd September would create a fantastic in-house and MAT-wide opportunity
- better to have an Autumn term 2 days shorter than Option 2, and a Summer term 2 days longer than Option 2.

I have looked at the proposed two options for the term dates for 2021-22 and would much prefer Option 1. The reasons are:

We want to come back to school in September not August.

We want as many full weeks as possible, so finishing the year on a Friday is much better and to not have a TT day set by the authority on the Monday afterwards is much better.

A September start to term is more appropriate for staff

Two even length Autumn half terms are much easier to plan for to support the children's learning

Option 1 is much more evenly distributed than Option 2 and would avoid uneven term lengths.

It will be good to be aligned with neighbouring Coventry

Our neighbouring authorities are Northants & Oxfordshire, would be preferential to be inline.

We would like the term to be in line with Coventry schools to enable staff who live in Coventry to be at home with their children. This year has been very difficult due to the difference in weeks off.

The majority of staff and governors across my three schools are in favour of option 1 as it is more in line with Oxfordshire term dates. Some staff who work in Warwickshire and whose children go to Oxfordshire schools have missed a lot of holiday time with their children over the past few years.

Option 1 has a September return and the usual half term break in the final week of October.

It is recommended to adopt Option 1 as it received more positive support in the consultation.

Background information

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 consult on the term dates and have generally followed the Local Authority's pattern of terms and holiday dates.

A number of guiding principles have 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.

On occasion, feedback is received relating to concerns regarding the length of the Autumn term. This model is agreed with the majority of our Regional and neighbouring authorities.

Warwickshire County Council will continue to explore alternative options and raise the matter at the next regional meeting.

Financial implications

None.

Environmental implications

None.

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Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Education & Learning

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

Lists of reports considered

List of background papers

1. Copy of letter sent to schools for consultation
2. Final calendar recommended for approval

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Colin Hayfield

Corporate Board

Legal

Finance

Equality

Democratic Services

Councillors – Coin Hayfield

Local Member(s): N/A