

Leeds 2025-2026 School Calendar

Date: 24th May 2024

Report of: Admissions and Family Information Services Coordinator

Report to: The Director of Children & Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The local authority is required to publish the school academic year calendar on an annual basis.

Whilst maintained schools are required to follow the calendar set by the local authority and are not permitted to change this, academies, free schools, foundation schools and voluntary-aided schools all have the freedom to set their own term dates.

This report outlines consultation on the Leeds school calendar and recommends the dates to be adopted for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children & Families is recommended to approve the 2025-2026 calendar as detailed in appendix 1.

What is this report about?

- 1 Every local authority is required to set the school calendar on an annual basis. Each year dates are drafted in conjunction with neighbouring authorities based on guiding principles for the Yorkshire region. These are shared with a range of groups and feedback and comments sought.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 2 All maintained schools within the Leeds authority area are required to follow the calendar set by the local authority and are not permitted to change this. Academies, free schools, foundation schools and voluntary-aided schools all have the freedom to set their own term dates, but nevertheless are encouraged to follow the LA dates where possible, to minimise any difficulties for families.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 3 Child Friendly city – consistent term dates across the region supports families and minimises costs around childcare. The fixed Easter break ensures no spring or summer term is too long, minimising pupil fatigue.
- 4 Health & Wellbeing – the Leeds 2025-2026 dates (with the exception of the Easter break) match those of other authorities, enabling families across the region or nationally to spend time together.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 5 In Spring 2024 draft dates for the 2025-2026 academic year were shared with the following:

Primary Headteachers: Primary Heads welcomed the draft calendar, as apart from the Easter break, holidays are in line across the West Yorkshire area. Primary Headteachers noted the difficulties that can be caused when dates are not in line, particularly with our significant neighbours Bradford and Wakefield.

Secondary Headteachers/Principals: Secondary Headteachers welcomed the draft calendar as dates are in line across the region, reducing the difficulties faced by families with children at school across different authorities. Many Leeds secondary schools are academies and therefore have the freedom to set their own dates and are not required to follow those set by the authority.

Schools Joint Consultative Committee: The Schools Joint Consultative Committee (SJCC) - NAHT, NASUWT, GMB, NEU, and Unison welcomed the draft calendar as the dates are in line across the region (with the exception of the Easter break).

The main comment raised by the Unions related to the late August bank holiday in 2026 (Monday 31st August) and start of the subsequent academic year 2026-27, and whether this should be Monday 7th September as per the regional principles, or one week earlier Tuesday 1st September (otherwise the summer holiday is 7 weeks long). Consultation on the 2026-27 school calendar will not take place until Spring 2025, and Leeds will work with neighbouring LAs to ensure that the start of the new academic year is aligned.

Executive Member for Children & Families: The Executive Member welcomed the draft calendar and noted the comments received from all groups.

What are the resource implications?

- 6 There are no immediate implications.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 7 Since 2010 Leeds has had a fixed school Easter break. In some years this is out of line with neighbouring authorities which can cause difficulties for families who live and work across local

authority boundaries. In 2026 all neighbouring local authorities will start their school Easter break one week earlier than Leeds.

- 8 The Easter bank holidays usually fall within the two-week school break, either at the beginning, middle or end. In 2026 they will fall at the beginning of the Easter break.
- 9 Academies have the freedom to set their own dates and are not required to follow the school calendar set by the local authority. Dates set by the Local Authority are nevertheless shared with all schools for their awareness, and schools are encouraged to adopt these where possible in order to support families with children across different schools.

What are the legal implications?

10 No implications

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

11 No other options needed to be explored, as with the exception of the Easter break the dates for Leeds match other LA dates across the region.

How will success be measured?

12 Not applicable.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

13 It is a statutory requirement that the local authority produces and publishes the annual school calendar at least four school terms in advance of the commencement of the calendar. Dates for the 2025-2026 academic year must be published before the end of the 2024 summer term.

Appendices

- School calendar
- Regional calendar comparison

Background papers

- None