

**Report of Governance and Partnership Officer**

**Report to The Director of Children & Families**

**Date: 25 June 2018**

**Subject: Leeds School Calendar – academic year 2019-20**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the recent consultation on the Leeds school calendar, and recommend the dates to be adopted for the 2019-20 academic year.

**Recommendations**

2. The Director of Children & Families is recommended to approve the 2019-20 calendar as detailed in appendix 1.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the recent consultation on the Leeds school calendar, and recommend the dates to be adopted for the 2019-20 academic year.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 As agreed by Education Committee in November 1996 the proposed calendar is based on a three term model unified across primary and secondary schools.
- 2.2 Dates in Leeds are set on an annual basis. Draft dates adhere to guiding principles for the region and are shared with neighbouring authorities across West and North Yorkshire. Draft school calendar options are shared with the Primary Headteacher Forum, Leeds Secondary Heads and Principals group, a representative Governors Group, the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee, and Lead Members for Children's Services.
- 2.3 Prior to 2011 Leeds always had an Easter break that moved with the Easter bank holiday. As a result of growing support within the education community for more consistency with the length of terms, and following a consultation in 2008, the May 2009 Executive Board adopted a fixed break of the first two full weeks in April. A second consultation took place in 2013. The public remained in favour of the fixed break and the decision to continue with this arrangement was taken at the June 2013 Executive Board.
- 2.4 The Easter bank holidays usually fall within the two-week school break, either at the beginning, middle or end. Once every few years they fall entirely outside of the school break. In 2020 they fall in the middle of the school break.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Whilst the majority of respondents appear to be happy with the fixed Easter break, it is also true that some families would prefer the Easter break to always incorporate the bank holidays. Parents who live and work across authority boundaries fall into this category as differing school calendars make spending family time together more difficult, and can also generate increased childcare costs.
- 3.2 Leeds had hoped that other authorities would fix their Easter break, but to date the only other authority to do so is Sheffield who has a fixed Easter break from 2018.
- 3.3 The Education Act received Royal Assent on 26 March 2015, but the particular provision affecting term dates, allowing maintained schools to set their own calendar was not commenced. So there is no practical change in the law on school term dates; Academies, free schools, foundation schools and voluntary-aided schools have the freedom to set their own term dates, but Section 32 of the Education Act remains unchanged and maintained schools cannot determine their own school terms.

3.4 Neighbouring authorities' dates for 2019-20 can be found in appendix 2. In the 2019-20 year school calendars are identical across West and North Yorkshire.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 In June 2018 draft dates for 2019-2020 were shared with the following groups:

- Primary Headteacher Forum
- Leeds Secondary Heads and Principals group
- School governor group (Local Leaders of Governance)
- Teachers Joint Consultative Committee
- Executive Members for Children & Families

4.1.2 Primary Headteacher Forum welcomed the draft calendar, particularly as it is in line with all neighbouring authorities. They suggested one amendment; starting the year on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September instead of on Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 and ending the school year on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July instead of on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020. It means the final day of the summer term would be a Monday but it was noted that many schools would take this as a training day or a disaggregated training day. Making this change would bring our September start date in line with all of our neighbours, and bring our July finish date in line with the majority of our neighbours.

4.1.3 The draft calendar was well received by the school governors' 'Local leaders of Governance' especially as the alignment with nearby local authorities should alleviate some of the usual concerns.

4.1.4 The TJCC (NAHT and NASUWT) welcomed the draft and noted that for the first time in a number of years it is good to see LA school holidays coincide across the region.

4.1.5 Executive Members for Children & Families acknowledged feedback received, and concurred that having dates that join up across the region is enormously helpful to families. The Lead Member was happy to amend along the lines suggested by schools, so the year would start on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2019 and end on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

4.1.6 The Children and Families Leadership Team approved the draft calendar along with the adjustments noted in 5.1.6.

4.1.7 As a result of ongoing interest in revisiting the fixed Easter break, Children & Families consulted again in spring 2018. Results of this consultation will be available in September 2018 and will determine the Easter break pattern from 2020 – 2021 onwards.

- 4.1.8 In the 2020-2021 academic year the Easter bank holidays fall within the school Easter break and difficulties are unlikely.
- 4.1.9 As more schools become academies they have freedom to set their own dates so do not need to follow the school calendar set by the LA.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 An Equality Impact screening has been undertaken and identified that a full assessment is not required (see appendix 3).

## **4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 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.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 There are no immediate implications.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no immediate implications. This report is subject to call-in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 Failure to agree the school calendar will result in us not meeting the statutory timeframe for publishing the calendar.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 In the 2019 – 2020 academic year dates align across the West and North Yorkshire region and have therefore been well received by all groups.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Children & Families is recommended to approve the draft dates for 2019 - 2020.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.