

Leeds 2023-2024 School Calendar

Date: 30 May 2022

Report of: Principal Administration Manager

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

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- 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 2023-2024 academic year.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children & Families is recommended to approve the 2023-2024 calendar as detailed in appendix 1.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 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 and 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?

Wards Affected: ALL

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 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.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 In Spring 2022 draft dates for the 2023-2024 academic year were shared with the following groups. Dates align across the West Yorkshire region and have therefore been well received:

Primary Headteachers: Primary Heads welcomed the draft calendar as all holidays except the school Easter break are in line across neighbouring LAs. Some Heads feel it would help staff and their childcare and work life balance if Leeds always had the same Easter break as other Local Authorities, as it can cause difficulties in the years when the Easter break is not aligned.

Leeds Secondary Heads and Principals: Secondary Heads welcomed the draft calendar as dates are broadly in line across the region, reducing the difficulties faced by families with children at school across different authorities. A comment was made about the October half term falling late, but this does occur some years and the half term week is in line with neighbouring LAs. 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.

School Governors (National Leaders of Governance, and Local Leaders of Governance): School Governors welcome the draft dates being broadly in line with other authorities. No further comments received.

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

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education: The Executive Member welcomed the draft calendar and noted the comments received from all groups.

What are the resource implications?

- 4 There are no immediate implications.

What are the legal implications?

- 5 There are no immediate implications.

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

- 6 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 2024 the Leeds Easter break starts one week later than that of neighbouring LAs.
- 7 The Easter bank holidays usually fall within the two-week school break, either at the beginning, middle or end. However, once every few years they fall entirely outside of the school break. In 2024 they fall at the beginning of the Leeds Easter break.
- 8 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.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

- Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 9 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.
- 10 Health & Wellbeing – the Leeds 2023-2024 dates (including the Easter break) match those of other authorities, enabling families across the region or nationally to spend time together.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 11 No other options needed to be explored, as the dates for Leeds fully match other LA dates across the region.

b) How will success be measured?

- 12 Not applicable

c) What is the timetable 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 2023-2024 academic year must be published in the summer term 2022.

Appendices

14 Appendix 1 - Draft school calendar

Background papers

15 None