
SCHOOL TERM DATES 2016-17

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor C.L. Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Jenni Cooke, Director of Children, Families & Learning

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider and set school term date arrangements for Darlington Maintained Schools for the academic years 2016/17 and to publish these by the end of June 2015.

Summary

2. In line with previous practice, all North East and Yorkshire Local Authorities have corresponded with a view to coordinate school term dates. This year it was again possible to coordinate term dates with authorities in the two regions using the previously agreed Guiding Principles as background papers. Proposals to set term dates for the 2016/17 academic year are presented for Cabinet's approval. This will assist schools, parents and the authority in their planning processes.
3. Each Local Authority publishes coordinated term dates at least 15 months before the academic year referred to actually commences. The dates for the next academic year (1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016) were published in June 2014 after consultation with other LA's and agreement by Cabinet.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members consider and agree to the publication of the Model School Term dates for Darlington Maintained schools for the 2016/17 Academic Year.

Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported as the draft model is the one preferred by most schools, Governing Bodies and other interested parties in Darlington following the consultation exercise which ended on 22nd May 2015.

Jenni Cooke
Director of Children, Families & Learning

Background Papers

School Calendar - Guiding Principles for Yorkshire and North East Regions School Term Dates Planning – Consultation Papers for 2016/17

Chris Bracken
Extension: 5898

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising directly from this report that relate directly to crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues arising directly from this report that relate directly to health and well being.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	The content of this report impacts equally across all groups.
Wards Affected	All wards equally affected.
Groups Affected	Parents, pupils, schools, neighbouring authorities equally affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no change to the Budget and Policy framework as a result of this report.
Key Decision	This is a key decision as it affects all wards in Darlington.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report links to Aspiring Darlington as it recommends school term dates and the number of school days on which students have to attend.
Efficiency	This report enables all affected to make long term plans.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. Following the circulation of the information paper to schools and governors on this subject in Spring 2015, officers from Local Authorities across the North East and Yorkshire regions have drafted a preferred term date model for the 2016/17 academic year and have consulted with stakeholders, including schools and Governing Bodies, to ascertain their preferred model. The detailed model is shown in Appendix 1; 2016-17 Term Dates – CALENDAR VERSION.
7. The tenet of the process has been to take into account:-
 - (a) The 195 school day academic year envelope (this allows schools to set up to five professional development days for teaching staff when pupils will not attend).
 - (b) Equalisation of term lengths as far as possible.
 - (c) The summer public holiday in 2016 falls on Monday 29th August, meaning that the academic year begins on Thursday 1 September 2016.
8. Local Authorities set the term dates for maintained schools and nurseries. Academy and Free School funding agreements state that the setting of the duration of the school year, term and holiday dates are the responsibility of the Academy Trust. In Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) maintained schools, Governing Bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in conjunction with the Local Authority. The majority of Academies and VA schools in Darlington have continued to follow the LA published dates despite having the freedom to set their own dates. The 2015 consultation exercise also requested that Academy schools send in their own arranged dates for 2016/17 for inclusion in any future publication of term dates if they chose not to express a preference for the model calendar presented.
9. In the event that a Free School or Academy Trust or Governing Body wishes to set its own term dates from September 2015, it would still be free to do so. The 2015 Deregulation Act, when it comes into force later in Summer 2015, will confer the same power to the Governing Bodies of maintained schools. Therefore, 2015 will be the last time that Cabinet is required to set Term Dates for Darlington maintained schools.
10. Consultation has been undertaken with schools (including Academies and Free Schools), Governing Bodies and neighbouring authorities. Schools have expressed their support and gratitude for facilitating the arrangements to coincide with consultations on the same subject by our neighbours in Stockton, Durham and North Yorkshire. They have proposed roughly the same dates as contained in Appendix 1; 2016-17 Term Dates – CALENDAR VERSION
11. However, the Department for Education have recommended (and Darlington Head Teachers have agreed) that the term dates for future years will be set by Governing Bodies locally with Local Authorities suggesting a calendar, coordinating the consultation and publishing the agreed results. Therefore, details of term dates for

the 2017/18 Academic year will continue to be published on the Darlington Council website and elsewhere from June 2016.

Outcome of the 2015 Consultation for the 2016-17 Academic Year Term Dates

12. Officers have consulted with 42 schools in Darlington as well as with their relevant Governing Bodies. By 22 May 2015 (the closing date for the consultation) 22 responses were received as follows:-
 - (a) 21 Schools / Governing Bodies expressed their preference for the dates in the Model calendar;
 - (b) 1 Governing Body declined to select the Model calendar and will, under their own auspices as an academy or a free school, set their own school term dates for 2016/17 following consultation with their relevant stakeholders.