

**CABINET
7 SEPTEMBER 2021**

SCHOOL TERM DATES 2023-24

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Jon Clarke,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – James Stroyan,
Group Director of People**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider and set school term date arrangements for Darlington maintained schools for the academic years 2023-2024 and to publish these by the end of September 2021.

Summary

2. Proposals to set term dates for academic years 2023-24 are presented for Cabinet's approval. This will assist schools, parents and the authority in their planning processes.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended Members consider and agree to the publication of the proposed school term dates for Darlington maintained schools for academic year 2023-24.

Reason

4. The recommendation is supported as the draft dates are the ones preferred by the majority of schools and Governing Bodies that responded to the consultation which ended on 2 July 2021.

**James Stroyan
Group Director of People**

Background Papers

School Term Dates Planning – Consultation Papers for 2023-2024 made up as follows:

- (i) School Term Dates Covering Letter to Schools
- (ii) School Term Dates Guidance Note
- (iii) **Appendix 1** – School Term Dates 2023-24
- (iv) **Appendix 2** – School Term Dates Response Form

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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 wellbeing.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	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
Key Decision	This is a key decision and has been included in the Forward Plan
Urgent Decision	This not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This does not link directly to priorities in the Council Plan
Efficiency	This report enables all affected to make long term plans.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Following the circulation of the consultation papers (see attached background papers) to schools and governors on this subject on 29 April 2021 and consultation with officers from Local Authorities across the North East and Yorkshire regions, a preferred term date model for academic years 2023-24 was drafted and consulted with schools and Governing Bodies. The detailed 2023-24 term dates are at Appendix 1 to the consultation document.
6. The tenet of the process has been to take into account:
 - (a) The 190 day academic year envelope for pupils, which allows schools to set their own professional development days for teaching staff when pupils will not attend.
 - (b) Equalisation of term lengths as far as possible and the start and end of term weeks to be Mondays and Fridays as far as possible. Starting and ending terms on days other than Mondays and Fridays has historically had an adverse impact on pupil attendance levels.
7. Local Authorities set the term dates for maintained schools and nurseries. There are only six schools, out of the 42 in Darlington, that are still maintained by the Local Authority. 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.
8. 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 2021 consultation exercise also requested that Academy schools send in their own arranged dates for 2023-24 for inclusion in any future publication of term dates if they chose not to express a preference for the model calendar presented.
9. Consultation has been undertaken with schools (including Academies and Free Schools), Governing Bodies and neighbouring authorities. Other Local Authorities are still consulting, some have proposed the same dates as those contained in Appendix 1 for 2023-24.
10. Nationally, 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 with Local Authorities suggesting a calendar, coordinating the consultation exercise and publishing the agreed results. Therefore, details of term dates for the 2023-24 academic year will continue to be published on the Darlington Council website and elsewhere from September 2021.

Outcome of the Consultation for the 2023-24 Academic Year Term Dates

11. Officers have consulted with 42 schools in Darlington as well as with their relevant Governing Bodies. 33 responses from Governing Bodies and Headteachers were received as follows:-
 - (a) 31 Schools/Governing Bodies (73.8%) out of 42 schools expressed their preference for the dates in the model calendar;
 - (b) Additional comments have been received as follows:
 - (i) Hummersknott Academy will commence their Christmas holidays on 22 December and return on 8 January plus will take two additional days at the end of the academic year to compensate for twilight staff training sessions (schools are allowed up to five staff development days)
 - (ii) Holy Family are taking October and February half terms a week earlier than proposed and will commence their Christmas holidays on 22 December and return on 8 January
 - (iii) Hurworth and Longfield will take two additional days to compensate for twilight staff training sessions

12. Responses were received as follows:

School Name	2023-24
Beaumont Hill Academy	Yes
Polam Hall School	
Borough Road Nursery School**	Yes
George Dent Nursery School**	Yes
Abbey Infants' School	Yes
Abbey Junior School	Yes
Bishopton Redmarshall CofE Primary School	Yes
Corporation Road Community Primary School	Yes
Firthmoor Primary School	Yes
Gurney Pease Academy	Yes
Harrowgate Hill Primary School**	Yes
Heathfield Primary School	Yes
Heighington Church of England Primary School	Yes
High Coniscliffe CofE Primary School	Yes
Holy Family RC Primary School	No (see paragraph 11b. above)
Hurworth Primary School	Yes
Marchbank Free School	Yes
Mount Pleasant Primary School	Yes
Mowden Infants' School	Yes
Mowden Junior School	Yes
Northwood Primary School	Yes
Red Hall Primary School**	Yes
Reid Street Primary School	Yes
Skerne Park Academy	
Springfield Academy	Yes
St Augustine's RC Primary School	
St Bede's RC Primary School	
St John's Church of England Academy	Yes
St Mary's Cockerton CofE Primary School	Yes
St Teresa's RC Primary School	
St. George's Church of England Academy	Yes
The Rydal Academy	Yes
West Park Academy	Yes
Whinfield Primary**	
Carmel College	
Haughton Academy	Yes
Hummersknott Academy	No (see paragraph 11b. above)
Hurworth School	Yes
Longfield Academy of Sport	Yes
St Aidan's Church of England Academy	
Wyvern Academy	
Rise Carr College**	Yes

** LA Maintained Schools