



SCHOOL TERM DATES PLANNING – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023-2024

1. REASON FOR THIS ITEM

To bring to Governors and Headteacher's attention the proposed term dates for the 2023-2024 Academic Year and the possible impact this may have on:

- a) the education of children,
- b) staffing in schools including the 195 day envelope for teachers,
- c) the organisation of school support arrangements,
- d) families with children at more than one school and
- e) the wider region.

2. ACTION REQUIRED

Governors and Headteachers of Academy, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools are reminded that they are responsible for setting the term dates for their school and must consult with stakeholders when so doing. Local Authorities are required to consult with maintained schools when setting school terms dates.

Governors and Headteachers are therefore asked to:

- a) Consider the proposed model term dates for 2023-2024 at Appendix 1 to this consultation.
- b) Decide whether they would wish to adopt the model of proposed dates for the 2023-24 academic year. Alternatively, Academies, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools are requested to send in their own arranged dates for 2023-2024 for inclusion in any future publication of term dates for schools in Darlington
- c) Return the attached proforma at Appendix 2 detailing your school's preferred term dates for 2023-2024 (either adopting the model or setting your own dates if an Academy, Voluntary Aided or Free School) to paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk by **Friday 2nd July 2021**.

3. KEY QUESTIONS

Governors and Headteachers may wish to discuss the following in relation to their own school:

- a) What is the likely impact of the school opting for term dates outside the proposed models?
- b) How would the Governing Body consult with stakeholders around any proposed changes to term dates?

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1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Officers from Darlington have drafted a preferred term date model for the 2023-2024 academic year and are now consulting with stakeholders, including Schools and Governing Bodies, to ascertain their preferences.

The tenet of the process in drawing up the proposed calendars has been to take into account:

- The 190 / 195 school day envelope
- The equalizing of term lengths as far as possible
- The fact that Easter dates vary year-on-year.
- Minimising the number of part-weeks by ensuring, as far as possible, that schools open for full weeks (Monday to Friday).

Academy and Free School funding agreements state that the duration of the school year, term and holiday dates are the responsibility of the Academy Trust. Governing Bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, in conjunction with the Local Authority. The majority of Darlington Academies and VA Schools have continued to follow published dates despite having the freedom to set their own dates.

In the event that a Governing Body of an Academy or Free School wishes to set its own term dates for 2023-2024, it would be free to do so but would have to carry out consultation with likely affected parties beforehand, including the Local Authority. Governors should be aware that Local Authority services provided on a term-time basis (such as school crossing patrols, transport for swimming etc.) may not be available if their school is open during a week when the majority of Darlington schools are closed. Governors should also consider the impact on families with children at more than one school (one or more of which may also be outside Darlington) in terms of coordinating family holidays or transport to school if they choose to set different term dates to the majority of Darlington schools.

If schools, governors or other interested parties wish to make enquiries or representation about this matter, please contact Paul Richardson, Head of Skills and Employability at Darlington Borough Council by e-mail at paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk in the first instance.

2. **NEXT STEPS**

Headteachers and Governing Bodies are requested to consider the contents of this paper and the model academic year calendar attached to decide their preferred option. Complete the enclosed form and return it to paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk by **Friday 2nd July 2021**. Alternatively, for those schools that already have the power conferred on them to do so and who do not wish to adopt the model, they should draw up their own calendar of term dates and consult with their stakeholders (including Darlington Borough Council) accordingly.