

**CABINET
5 SEPTEMBER 2023**

SCHOOL TERM DATES 2025/26

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, 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 2025-2026 and to publish these by the end of September 2023.

Summary

2. Proposals to set term dates for academic years 2025-26 are presented for Cabinet's approval. This will assist schools, parent/carers and the authority in their planning processes.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Members consider and agree to the publication of the proposed school term dates for Darlington maintained schools for academic year 2025-26.

Reasons

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 7 July 2023.

**James Stroyan
Group Director of People**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising directly from this report that relate directly to crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	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	Contributes to: Children with a best start in life
Efficiency	This report enables all affected to make long term plans.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Following the circulation of the consultation papers (**see appendices**) to schools and governors on this subject on 28 April 2023 and consultation with officers from Local Authorities across the North East and Yorkshire regions, a preferred term date model for academic years 2025-26 was drafted and consulted with schools and Governing Bodies. The detailed 2025-26 term dates are at **Appendix 3** to the consultation document. These are summarized below:
 - (a) 1 September 2025 – 24 October 2025
 - (b) 3 November 2025 – 19 December 2025
 - (c) 5 January 2026 – 20 February 2026
 - (d) 2 March 2026 – 2 April 2026
 - (e) 20 April 2026 – 22 May 2026
 - (f) 1 June 2026 – 17 July 2026

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 will only be five schools, out of the 42 in Darlington, from September 2023 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 2023 consultation exercise also requested that Academy schools send in their own arranged dates for 2025-26 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 3 for 2025-26.
10. Nationally, the Department for Education recommend that term dates are established by Local Authorities suggesting a calendar, coordinating the consultation exercise and publishing the agreed results. However, academy governing bodies remain free to set their own dates, although the majority of Darlington schools use the local authority proposed calendar. Details of term dates for the 2025-26 academic year will be published on the Darlington Council website and elsewhere from September 2023.

Consultation

11. Officers have consulted with 42 schools in Darlington as well as with their relevant Governing Bodies. 33 responses were received from Governing Bodies and Headteachers (76.8% of schools):-
 - (a) All schools/governing bodies that responded expressed their preference for the dates in the model calendar;
 - (b) No alternative proposals were received.
12. The following caveats were received:-
 - (a) Heighington – Not taking PD days on 20/7 and 21/7, school will be open to pupils;
 - (b) High Coniscliffe and St Mary's – Schools haven't formally met yet to agree their dates but in principle they are likely to follow LA proposed dates;
 - (c) Longfield Academy – School will be closed on 28/11, 20/7 and 21/7 as they have disaggregated training days.

13. A full list of responses received are below:

School Name	2025-26
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	
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	
Skerne Park Academy	Yes
Springfield Academy	Yes
St Augustine's RC Primary School	
St Bede's RC Primary School	
St John's Church of England Academy	
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	Yes
Carmel College	
Haughton Academy	Yes
Hummersknott Academy	Yes
Hurworth School	Yes
Longfield Academy of Sport	Yes
St Aidan's Church of England Academy	Yes
Wyvern Academy	
Rise Carr College**	Yes

** LA Maintained Schools