

From: Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 30 June 2021

Subject: School Term Dates for 2022-23 and Update on Queen’s Jubilee Celebrations

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Recommendation: The Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the decision to:

- (1) Agree the school term dates for KCC community and voluntary controlled schools for the school years 2022-23.

1. Background

- 1.1 KCC is responsible for setting term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools, while governing bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own term dates. Academies and free schools also have the freedom to decide their dates and length of terms.
- 1.2 In previous years the Local Government Association (LGA) has coordinated the preparation of a draft standard school year. However, the LGA has decided to stop coordinating the development of these draft models, because only around 40% of areas are now following the standard school year, as more academies and free schools determine the term dates for their schools.
- 1.3 Over a school year, pupils are required to attend for 190 days/380 sessions. In total, teachers may be required to be available for work on up to 195 days, with the additional days specified by individual schools as non-contact days. Schools may also require teachers to work additional hours before or after school sessions, as an alternative to full non-contact days, provided that any teacher is not required to work in aggregate more than 1,265 hours during a school year. Schools may therefore choose to require teachers to make up the full equivalent of the 5 non-contact days wholly through additional hours, or use a mixture of additional hours and non-contact days.

- 1.4 In determining the proposed future school term dates, KCC carried out a full consultation on the proposed dates. The proposed dates are attached as appendix 1.

2. Consultation Process and Proposed Dates

- 2.1 KCC consulted on the proposed term dates for the academic years 2022-23 from 15 April to 26 May 2021. The consultation was circulated to all schools via the e-bulletin and with other key stakeholders such as governors (including parent groups), the Diocesan bodies, trade unions and neighbouring local authorities. The general public was also encouraged to participate. Below is a link to the consultation and equality impact assessment:
<https://letstalkkent.uk/engagementhq.com/school-term-dates>
- 2.2 The consultation documents were downloaded 5,505 times and received 289 responses. During the consultation process a number of responses were received regarding the recent announcement that the Government is looking at the possibility of shortening the summer holiday and moving to a five-term school year. Most of the responses about the Government's suggestion stated that they would not want term dates to move, however these responses were outside of the remit of the consultation.
- 2.3 Of the responses received 215 related to proposed term dates for 2022-23, which consisted of 141 parents / carers (including grandparents); 24 Headteachers (including Head of School and a Deputy Head); 24 teachers including teaching assistants; 8 school governors; 7 school administrators; 3 Kent residents; 2 early years settings; 1 union representative; 1 other Local Authority; a Diocese representative; a parish councilor; an academy trust member; a clinical psychologist; and a youth charity.
- 2.3 The majority of respondents, 160 out of 215, supported the proposed term dates for 2022-23, while 55 respondents opposed the dates. A summary of the responses can be found in appendix 2.
- 2.4 Of the 160 respondents who supported the proposed dates, 14 were Headteachers; 18 were teachers and teaching assistants; 7 school governors; 1 trade union representative; 1 other Local Authority; Diocese representative; a parish councilor; academy trust member; a youth charity and college student.
- 2.5 Of the 55 respondents, who opposed the proposed dates, 16 respondents were concerned about the start date of term 1 beginning midweek. The LGA recommendation is that schools should return as close to the 1st September as possible. As the majority of respondents agreed the term dates the proposed dates will remain unchanged.
- 2.6 8 respondents would prefer equal term dates and 6 respondents in are favour of two-week break in October. As most respondents agreed with the proposed dates this will remain unchanged. 6 respondents would like to see coordinated term dates for all Kent schools. Kent as the Local Authority is only responsible for setting the term dates for Community and Voluntary controlled schools, therefore we are unable to make this change.

- 2.7 Analysis from the consultation showed that there was no clear agreement on whether to extend or reduce term length or school breaks. However, many responses to the consultation stated that they preferred the longer summer holidays.
- 2.8 A report by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) appreciated the concerns of parents regarding the length of the summer holidays and the pressure of childcare. However, it considered that reducing the length of the summer holidays may lead to an increase in absenteeism, as families, particularly those with families overseas, use the long summer break to visit relatives and any change will have an impact on their ability to do this. In turn this could lead to schools receiving additional requests for pupils to be taken out of school during term time, with serious long-term implications for the education of those pupils.
- 2.9 Responses were consistent across all respondent types based on their answers to the equality and diversity questions. There were no differences of note between how different people responded about the proposed school terms dates.
- 2.10 Consequently, as the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed dates in 2022-23, Members are asked to agree the recommendation set out below.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.1 The EqIA has been reviewed again following the consultation and no updates were required
<https://letstalkkent.uk/engagementhq.com/school-term-dates>

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct cost implications arising from the decision on the school calendar. However, if individual foundation, voluntary aided schools, academies or free schools determine a different pattern of term dates, they may incur additional costs in relation to home to school transport, as the authority passes any additional costs on to the schools concerned.

5. Risks

- 5.1 Following the recent announcement that the Government is looking at the possibility of shortening the summer holiday and moving to a five-term school year, it is possible that the proposed term dates for 2022-23 may have to be altered following determination. In addition, if we do not determine the term dates, the LA will not be meeting its statutory obligation.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation:

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| 6.1 The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is |
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asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education on the decision to:

- (1) Agree the school term dates for KCC community and voluntary controlled schools for the school years 2022-23.

Background Documents

KCC Consultation – School Term dates 2022-23

<https://letstalkkent.uk/engagementhq.com/school-term-dates>

Equalities Impact assessment

<https://letstalkkent.uk/engagementhq.com/school-term-dates>

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