

**From:** Matt Dunkley, CBE, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

**To:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

**Subject:** School Term Dates for 2020-21 & 2021-22

**Decision number:** 19/00006

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision**

**Electoral Division: All**

**Recommendation:** The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to agree the school term dates for Kent County Council's community and voluntary controlled schools for the school years 2020-21 and 2021-22.

## **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.
- 1.5 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 2020-21, 2021-22 from 14 January to 24 February 2019. 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 neighboring local authorities. The general public was also encouraged to participate. Below is a link to the consultation and equalities impact assessment:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/termdates2020to2022/consultationHome>

2.2 The consultation received 54 responses as follows: 26 parents/carers (including grandparents), 15 Headteachers (including Head of school and a deputy head), 6 teachers including teaching assistants, 3 school governors, 2 school admin and 2 union reps.

2.3 The majority of respondents, 35 out of 54, supported the proposed term dates for 2020-21 and 2021-22, 17 respondents opposed the dates and 2 were undecided. A full summary of the responses can be found in appendix 2.

2.4 Of the 35 respondents who supported the proposed dates, 20 made no further comments. A summary of the other comments received can be found in appendix 2.

2.5 Of the 17 respondents who opposed the proposed dates there was no singular attributing factor to the objection. The most common reason stated (5 respondents) felt that Term 1 in 2020 was too long. Two respondents commented that the Term1 break in October 2020 was a week later than in previous years, which has an adverse effect on their pre-booked family holiday. In the proposed dates, Term 1 in 2020 consists of 39 days with Term 2 lasting 35 days. However, if Term 1 concludes a week earlier (16<sup>th</sup> October) then Term 1 would last for 34 days and Term 2 for 40 days. From other responses received many felt that even terms were better for pupil and teaching staff, therefore it is recommended that the proposed dates for Term 1 in 2020 remain unchanged.

2.8 Collectively 6 respondents commented that they would prefer two week breaks during the year and a shorter summer break, however there was no clear agreement on whether to extend the Term 1 (October), Term 3 (February) or Term 5 (May) breaks. However, in both the positive and negative comments received other respondents stated that they preferred the longer summer holidays.

2.9 A report by the 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.

- 2.11 A few Headteachers asked that Term 1 in 2020 begin later to shorten the first term length, however the LGA recommend that pupils return to school as close to the 1st of September as possible. Therefore, it is proposed that the first day of term remains as Tuesday 1st September 2020.
- 2.12 Consequently, as the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed dates in 2020-21 and 2021-22, amendments to the proposed dates are not required and therefore Members are asked to agree the recommendation set out below.

### **3. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 3.1 A full EqIA was completed as part of the process and can be found via the following link:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/termdates2020to2022/consultationHome>

### **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. Recommendation(s)**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is asked to agree the school term dates for Kent County Council's community and voluntary controlled schools for the school years 2020-21 and 2021-22.
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### **6. Background Documents:**

None.

### **7. Contact details**

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