

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday 20 May 2014

School Session Dates 2015/16

Item number	8.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

The annual consultation took place on proposed Session Dates for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. Those consulted were :

- Parent Council Chairs (asking them to consult with Parent Forums)
- Head Teachers (asking them to consult with school staff)
- Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT)
- Neighbourhood Parent Council Meetings

Links

Coalition pledges	P1 – P6
Council outcomes	CO1 – CO6
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

Report

School Session Dates 2015/16

Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to approve the Session Dates for 2015/16 (Appendix one) and to approve a survey to be carried out in relation to the criteria for setting dates for use from 2016/17 onwards.

Background

Consultation

- 2.1 There were four hundred and eighty seven responses to the consultation as follows:

Parents/ Guardians	250
Head Teachers/ School staff	152
Parent Councils	30
Teacher and Parent	16
LNCT	1
Community Learning	2
After School Club	2
Other	33
SSTA	1

- 2.2 As part of the Council's consultation on dates for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, the views of Head Teachers and Parent Councils were sought. Head Teachers were asked to advise school staff and Parent Councils were asked to advise parents. Opportunity for feedback was also available through the main Council website.

- 2.2.1 As the start of session date had been early – 14 August in 2013 and 13 August in 2014 and to allow pupils more time to view Festival events, the draft dates had a seven week Summer Break as opposed to a six week break.
- 2.2.2 In increasing the length of the Summer Break, the Christmas Break was shortened.

- 2.2.3 The vast majority of respondents indicated that they wished the Summer Break to remain at six weeks and the Christmas Break to be longer. (See Summary of Responses).
- 2.3 Future consultation on harmonising dates should include other Lothian authorities and Fife.

Main report

3.1 Summary of responses:

LNCT

- 3.1.1 The Teachers' Panel of the LNCT considered the proposed holiday dates for sessions 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. With regards to the first two sessions, the Teachers' Panel had no issues with the proposed dates.
- 3.1.2 For Session 2017/18, they recognised the difficulty that arises in fitting in the required 195 days of opening. They noted that the proposed dates address this through having a Christmas holiday of less than two weeks (10 working days) and a full 2 weeks at Easter. After considerable discussion, they decided that it was better to encourage teachers to participate in the consultation exercise rather than to recommend this model of a shorter Christmas holiday and longer Easter holiday. In their communication to teachers, they did make it clear that the alternative to the proposed model was a longer Christmas holiday and a shorter Easter holiday.

Summer

- 3.1.3 There were two hundred and forty four responses in favour of a six week break instead of seven weeks. The main reason given was that the longer break would mean parents incurring more childcare costs/ pressures. Other comments were that it was too long for pupils to retain information over the summer, pupils would be bored and would be fresher for the August start with a shorter break.
- 3.1.4 Preference for the longer seven week break was intimated by thirty three respondents and one wanted a break longer than seven weeks.

Christmas

- 3.1.5 Those in favour of the longer Christmas Break numbered three hundred and seven. The majority of reasons given were a longer recovery time for staff and pupils, more family time, travel arrangements and pupils and staff more prone to illness at this time of year.
- 3.1.6 There were twenty six responses in favour of a shorter Christmas Break.

February

- 3.1.7 Twenty comments included that there was no need to have a two week break so soon after Christmas and should be two days in line with some other Authorities.

Easter

- 3.1.8 Comments numbered forty one and included wanting a longer Easter Break, a Wednesday to Wednesday Break was not acceptable, fix the first two weeks in April and three holiday Mondays after Easter were too many.
- 3.1.9 Two were happy with a shorter Easter Break.

General

- 3.1.10 The most common comments received were that there should be more harmonisation of dates with the other ex- Lothian Authorities, May Holiday Mondays should be grouped together, objection to In Service Days being on Election Days and future consultations should include more information on the reasons for any changes.

Survey

- 3.1.11 Based on comments received, it is proposed that a survey of school staff, parents and parents be carried out to determine how future consultations should proceed. This would involve a questionnaire based on the criteria shown in Appendix Two. The results of the survey would be collated and based on results, criteria will be put in place and used as the basis for consultation on the 2016/17 dates and beyond.

Break Down by Days

- 3.1.12 The School Session 2015/16 can be broken down by days of the week as follows:
- Pupils (190 days) comprising: Monday 35, Tuesday 39, Wednesday 39, Thursday 39, Friday 38.
 - Staff (195 days) comprising Monday 35, Tuesday 40, Wednesday 40, Thursday 41, Friday 39.
 - In – Service Days on Polling Days.
- 3.1.13 A report on the Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Places was submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council on 18 November 2010.
- 3.1.14 One of the recommendations was to ‘agree to the designation of a staff In- Service Day in all City of Edinburgh primary schools on polling days for fixed term elections, where the dates are known well in advance, subject to further discussion with the Director of Children and Families.
- 3.1.15 Whilst it is primary schools which are mainly used as polling stations, it was proposed that all schools (secondary, primary, special and nursery)

would close to pupils and be used for staff In Service training. For Session 2015/16, schools will be closed on Thursday 5 May 2016 for the Scottish Parliament Election.

Measures of success

- 4.1 A survey will be carried out to determine the criteria for setting session dates from 2016/17 onwards. The success of this will be established from the subsequent consultation on 2016/17 dates.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There is no risk, policy, compliance and governance impact.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 None.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is no sustainability impact.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation took place with school staff, parents and teaching unions.

Background reading / external references

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Links

Coalition pledges	<p>P1 – Increase support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer go into care</p> <p>P2 – Hold the maximum P1 class size at 25 and seek to reduce class sizes in line with Scottish Government recommendations</p> <p>P3 – Rebuild Portobello High School and continue progress on all other planned school developments, while providing adequate investment in the fabric of all schools</p> <p>P4 – Draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both over-crowding and under use in schools</p> <p>P5 – Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum</p> <p>P6 – Establish city-wide co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO1 – Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed</p> <p>CO2 – Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities</p> <p>CO3 – Our children and young people in need, or with a disability, have improved life chances</p> <p>CO4 – Our children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy</p> <p>CO5 – Our children and young people are safe from harm or fear of harm, and do not harm others within their communities</p> <p>CO6 – Our children’s and young people’s outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO3 – Edinburgh’s children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential</p>
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft School Session Dates 2015/162. Proposed questionnaire to be used for establishing criteria for future Session Dates

Appendix 1

School Session Dates 2015/16

Staff resume		Thursday	13 August *	2015
Staff only		Friday	14 August *	2015
Pupils return		Monday	17 August	2015
Autumn Holiday	Schools closed	Monday	21 September	2015
All resume		Tuesday	22 September	2015
Mid-term	All break	Friday	9 October	2015
	Staff resume	Tuesday	20 October*	2015
	Pupils resume	Wednesday	21 October	2015
Term ends		Tuesday	22 December	2015

Staff resume		Wednesday	6 January*	2016
Pupils resume		Thursday	7 January	2016
Mid-term	All break	Friday	12 February	2016
	All resume	Monday	22 February	2016
Term ends		Thursday	24 March	2016

<i>The Easter break incorporates the following two holidays</i>				
Good Friday	Schools closed	Friday	25 March	2016
Easter Monday	Schools closed	Monday	28 March	2016

All Resume		Monday	11 April	2016
Spring Holiday	Schools Closed	Monday	18 April	2016
May Day	Schools closed	Monday	2 May	2016
	All resume	Tuesday	3 May	2016
Staff only		Thursday	5 May*#	2016
Pupils resume		Friday	6 May	2016
Victoria Day	Schools closed	Monday	23 May	2016
Term ends		Thursday	30 June	2016

* Five In-Service days for all schools.

5th In Service Day coincides with date of Scottish Parliament Election.

The above timetable allows for staff and pupil attendance as follows:

	Pupils	Staff
Term 1	84	87
Term 2	51	52
Term 3	55	56
Total	190	195

P7/S1 Transition Days – Tuesday 21 June, Wednesday 22 June and Thursday 23 June 2016.

Appendix 2

Previous suggested Edinburgh Criteria, where possible, for School Session Dates

- Session to end before the beginning of the Trades Holiday, normally the first Saturday in July.
- Two In – Service Days for staff at the beginning of the Session.
- Provision for local holidays.
- A one week break during the third week in October (i.e. the week preceding the last Thursday in October).
- Two full weeks holiday at Christmas.
- Date of SQA examinations.
- First two weeks in April for Spring Break.

In previous consultations, teaching unions and many schools noted that a break of one week in February was preferred to a shorter break in order to benefit children at a time when pupils and staff can be more prone to illness.

Previously, the Education Committee had decided that for a five year period, until Session 2003/04, the Easter holiday would be fixed in weeks 2 and 3 in April. In some years, however, this meant that the Easter weekend was not included within the Easter Break and was subsequently not adhered to.