

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 6 March 2018

School Session Dates Consultation

Item number 7.2
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments [29](#)

Executive Summary

This report summarises responses to a consultation of parents/carers, pupils and staff on the criteria for future school session dates. More than 9,000 people took part in the consultation and the feedback has informed proposed session dates for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 which are attached as appendix 2.

The survey included questions about the current holiday pattern and whether it is still appropriate. The responses show that there is broad support amongst parents/carers, pupils and staff for the way in which the school year is currently organised, including the timing of holidays and in-service days.

Report

School Session Dates

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note the response to the consultation.
- 1.2 Agree the proposed session dates for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2. Background

- 2.1 A previous consultation on the criteria for setting school session dates was carried out in February 2015. At that time committee agreed to consult with stakeholders again in 2017.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The consultation took place between October and November 2017. 9154 people took part of which 6483 were parents/carers; 2954 were members of staff; and 370 were pupils. Some people ticked more than one category (e.g. parent/carer and member of staff).
- 3.2 Draft questions were shared with the Consultative Committee with Parents and locality-based parent groups, as well as the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers. Parent/carer and staff feedback led to several changes in the wording of the questions.
- 3.3 In line with the children and young people's rights agenda, pupils were included in the consultation. Head teachers were asked to consult with pupil councils or as they felt appropriate.
- 3.4 The results of the survey are included as appendix two. The key findings were:
 - 3.4.1 A clear majority (66%) preferred two in-service days immediately after the summer holidays rather than at other times of the year. This view was shared by all three stakeholder groups – parents/carers, pupils and staff.
 - 3.4.2 The majority of all respondents, pupils and staff favoured retaining the second last full week in October for the October break. 50% of parents/carers also favoured this option with only 15% against.
 - 3.4.3 The overwhelming majority (89% overall) in all three stakeholder groups was in favour of retaining two weeks holiday at Christmas.
 - 3.4.4 Respondents were fairly evenly divided on how close to Christmas Day the holidays should start, although pupils favoured an earlier finish.

3.4.5 A clear majority (68%) of respondents across the stakeholder groups was in favour of retaining the week-long break in February. This was more pronounced amongst pupils and staff.

3.4.6 A clear majority of respondents across the stakeholder groups was in favour of retaining local holidays. This was more pronounced amongst pupils and staff. Whilst most parents/carers favoured retaining local holidays, almost a quarter disagreed.

3.4.7 More respondents in each stakeholder group preferred a fixed two-week Easter holiday, regardless of when Easter falls than those who didn't although this was short of an overall majority (other than for pupils).

3.4.8 Full results are included in Appendix 1.

3.5 Following the previous consultation in 2015, Committee agreed that the next consultation should include consideration of potentially more radical changes to the school session, including exploring the merits of a four-term year and a later summer holiday which would coincide with the Edinburgh Festivals. Respondents were asked to say the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- I am broadly satisfied with the current three term year.
- It makes sense for term dates in Edinburgh to be similar to those of neighbouring authorities (i.e. East, West and Midlothian and Fife).
- It would be good to explore the possibility of moving to a school year of four shorter terms instead.
- It would be good to start the summer holidays later so that they coincide with the Edinburgh Festival.

3.5.1 77% of all respondents agreed that they were broadly satisfied with the current three term year, with only 7% disagreeing. The response was consistent across the three stakeholder groups.

3.5.2 61% of all respondents agreed that it makes sense for term dates in Edinburgh to be similar to those of neighbouring authorities.

3.5.3 Respondents were fairly evenly divided on the possibility of exploring a move to a school year of four shorter terms. Slightly more respondents were against the idea than for it, although the largest response (35%) was 'neither agree nor disagree'. Pupils were more likely to favour exploring the possibility.

3.5.4 Although 30% of respondents agreed that it would be good to start the summer holidays later to coincide with the Edinburgh Festivals, the majority (52%) disagreed with the idea. This was fairly consistent across the different stakeholder groups.

3.6 Given the response to the survey it is proposed that the criteria for setting school session dates should remain as they are at present for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. These are set out in appendix 2.

- 3.7 Given that there is at least some interest in potential alternative models, it may be worth continuing to explore these and other options with staff, parents/carers and pupils in the future.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 More than 9000 people took part in the consultation. Their views are reflected in the proposed dates for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no risk, policy, compliance or governance impacts as a result of this report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 None

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse impacts in relation to this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 This process involved consultation with parents/carers, pupils and staff across Edinburgh.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 School Session Dates 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and consultation on future dates.
ECFC 19 May 2015

Alistair Gaw

Executive Director for Communities and Families

David Maguire, Principal Officer for Engagement and Involvement, Communities and Families

11. Appendices

Appendix 1

School session dates 2019/20 and beyond

Total responses: 9154 of which:

Parent or carer	6483 (71%)
Pupil/student	370 (4%)
Member of staff - nursery or early years centre	251 (3%)
Member of staff – primary school	1637 (18%)
Member of staff - secondary school	913 (10%)
Member of staff – special school	153 (2%)
Other	92 (1%)

(Some respondents ticked more than one category, e.g. parent or carer and member of staff.)

School holidays:

Is it preferable to have the two in-service days immediately after the summer holidays rather than at other times of the year?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	5989 (66%)	3794 (59%)	187 (51%)	2485 (86%)
No	1253 (14%)	1034 (16%)	97 (26%)	149 (5%)
No preference	1876 (21%)	1627 (25%)	84 (23%)	241 (8%)

Is the second last full week in October the best timing for the ‘October break’?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	5002 (55%)	3198 (50%)	201 (55%)	1996 (69%)

No	1324 (15%)	996 (15%)	108 (30%)	277 (10%)
No preference	2778 (31%)	2252 (35%)	57 (16%)	601 (21%)

Should there still be two weeks holiday at Christmas?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	8128 (89%)	5621 (87%)	318 (87%)	2759 (96%)
No	586 (6%)	501 (8%)	28 (8%)	66 (2%)
No preference	403 (4%)	333 (5%)	20 (5%)	55 (2%)

How close to Christmas Day should the Christmas holidays start?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
22 or 23 Dec depending on the day Christmas Day falls	4085 (45%)	3002 (46%)	91 (25%)	1220 (42%)
20 or 21 December depending on the day Christmas Day falls	3847 (42%)	2616 (40%)	257 (70%)	1239 (43%)
No preference	1192 (13%)	845 (13%)	21 (6%)	412 (14%)

Currently there is a week-long break in February. Should this continue?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	6226 (68%)	3840 (60%)	340 (93%)	2536 (88%)
No	1841 (20%)	1679 (26%)	16 (4%)	193 (7%)
No preference	1035 (11%)	922 (14%)	10 (3%)	145 (5%)

Currently local holidays (April spring holiday, Victoria Day, September autumn holiday) are included in the holiday pattern. Should this continue?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	5823 (64%)	3622 (56%)	315 (86%)	2334 (81%)
No	166 6 (18%)	1498 (23%)	22 (6%)	189 (7%)
No preference	1625 (18%)	1336 (21%)	30 (8%)	343 (12%)

If the February break was shortened and local holidays given up, which holidays should the extra days be added to? (tick all that apply)

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Summer	2412 (28%)	1742 (29%)	156 (42%)	637 (23%)
October	3252 (38%)	2272 (38%)	93 (25%)	1119 (41%)
Christmas	2858 (33%)	1916 (32%)	216 (59%)	935 (34%)
Easter	1547 (18%)	1162 (19%)	61 (17%)	409 (15%)

Should the Easter holiday be a fixed two weeks regardless of when Easter falls?

Response option	All respondents	Parent/carers	Pupil/student	Staff
Yes	3981 (44%)	2609 (40%)	231 (63%)	1402 (49%)
No	2597 (28%)	1980 (31%)	62 (17%)	706 (25%)
No preference	2538 (28%)	1864 (29%)	74 (20%)	766 (27%)

Structure of the school year:

Statement	All respondents a) Agree b) Neither agree/disagree c) Disagree	Parent/carers a) Agree b) Neither agree/disagree c) Disagree	Pupil/student a) Agree b) Neither agree/disagree c) Disagree	Staff a) Agree b) Neither agree/disagree c) Disagree
I am broadly satisfied with the current three term year.	7034 (77%) 1455 (16%) 618 (7%)	4894 (76%) 1090 (17%) 467 (7%)	244 (67%) 82 (22%) 40 (11%)	2404 (84%) 331 (12%) 135 (5%)
It makes sense for term dates in Edinburgh to be similar to those of neighbouring authorities (i.e. East, West and Midlothian and Fife).	5548 (61%) 2520 (28%) 1040 (11%)	3736 (58%) 1892 (29%) 826 (13%)	252 (69%) 91 (25%) 22 (6%)	1953 (68%) 664 (23%) 249 (9%)
It would be good to explore the possibility of moving to a school year of four shorter terms instead.	2826 (31%) 3220 (35%) 3039 (33%)	1932 (30%) 2429 (38%) 2077 (32%)	153 (42%) 108 (30%) 103 (28%)	902 (32%) 861 (30%) 1096 (38%)
It would be good to start the summer holidays later so that they coincide with the Edinburgh Festival	2741 (30%) 1656 (18%) 4711 (52%)	1828 (28%) 1133 (18%) 3495 (54%)	129 (36%) 70 (19%) 163 (45%)	946 (33%) 552 (19%) 1370 (48%)

Appendix 2

School Session Dates 2019/20

Staff resume		Monday	12 August *	2019
Staff only		Tuesday	13 August *	2019
Pupils resume		Wednesday	14 August	2019
Autumn Holiday	Schools closed	Monday	16 September	2019
All resume		Tuesday	17 September	2019
Mid-term	All break	Friday	11 October	2019
Staff resume		Monday	21 October*	2019
Pupils resume		Tuesday	22 October	2019
Term ends		Friday	20 December	2019



Staff resume		Tuesday	7 January*	2020
Pupils resume		Wednesday	8 January	2020
Mid-term	All break	Friday	7 February	2020
All resume		Monday	17 February	2020
Term ends		Friday	3 April	2020

The Easter break incorporates the following two holidays

Good Friday	Schools closed	Friday	10 April	2020
Easter Monday	Schools closed	Monday	13 April	2020

All Resume		Tuesday	21 April	2020
May Day	Schools closed	Monday	4 May	2020
Staff only		Tuesday	5 May*	2020
Pupils resume		Wednesday	6 May	2020
Victoria Day	Schools closed	Monday	18 May	2020
All resume		Tuesday	19 May	2020
Term ends		Friday	26 June	2020

* Five In-Service days for all schools.

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

	Pupils	Staff
Term 1	86	89
Term 2	58	59
Term 3	46	47
Total	190	195

School Session Dates 2020/21

Staff resume		Monday	17 August *	2020
Staff only		Tuesday	18 August *	2020
Pupils resume		Wednesday	19 August	2020
Autumn Holiday	Schools closed	Monday	14 September	2020
All resume		Tuesday	15 September	2020
Mid-term	All break	Friday	16 October	2020
Staff resume		Monday	26 October*	2020
Pupils resume		Tuesday	27 October	2020
Term ends		Wednesday	23 December	2020



Staff resume		Wednesday	6 January*	2021
Pupils resume		Thursday	7 January	2021
Mid-term	All break	Friday	5 February	2021
All resume		Tuesday	16 February	2021
Term ends		Thursday	1 April	2021

The Easter break incorporates the following two holidays

Good Friday	Schools closed	Friday	2 April	2021
Easter Monday	Schools closed	Monday	5 April	2021

All Resume		Tuesday	20 April	2021
May Day	Schools closed	Monday	3 May	2021
Staff only		Tuesday	4 May*	2021
Pupils resume		Wednesday	5 May	2021
Victoria Day	Schools closed	Monday	24 May	2021
All resume		Tuesday	25 May	2021
Term ends		Friday	2 July	2021

* Five In-Service days for all schools.

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

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

School Session Dates 2021/22

Staff resume		Monday	16 August *	2021
Staff only		Tuesday	17 August *	2021
Pupils resume		Wednesday	18 August	2021
Autumn Holiday	Schools closed	Monday	13 September	2021
All resume		Tuesday	14 September	2021
Mid-term	All break	Friday	15 October	2021
Staff resume		Monday	25 October *	2021
Pupils resume		Tuesday	26 October	2021
Term ends		Thursday	23 December	2021

Staff resume		Monday	10 January *	2022
Pupils resume		Tuesday	11 January	2022
Mid-term	All break	Friday	11 February	2022
All resume		Monday	21 February	2022
Term ends		Friday	8 April	2022

<i>The Easter break incorporates the following two holidays</i>				
Good Friday	Schools closed	Friday	15 April	2022
Easter Monday	Schools closed	Monday	18 April	2022

All Resume		Monday	25 April	2022
May Day	Schools closed	Monday	2 May	2022
Staff only		Tuesday	3 May *	2022
Pupils resume		Wednesday	4 May	2022
Victoria Day	Schools closed	Monday	23 May	2022
All resume		Tuesday	24 May	2022
Term ends		Thursday	30 June	2022

* Five In-Service days for all schools.

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

	Pupils	Staff
Term 1	85	88
Term 2	59	60
Term 3	46	47
Total	190	195