

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **22 July 2021**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Proposed amendment to the school term and holiday dates for the academic year 2021/2022**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to finish the academic year 2021/2022 one day early, on Thursday 21 July 2022**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the academic year 2021/22 finishes one day early, on Thursday 21 July 2022.

1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council has a duty to agree school term and holiday dates for local authority maintained schools. Foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools and academies are responsible for setting their own school term and holiday dates.

1.2 The school term and holiday dates for the 2021/2022 academic year were agreed in May 2020. Local Authority maintained schools must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. Teacher training days are additional to this number; teachers in maintained schools must be available for work for 195 days, the additional five days per year being for other duties (INSET days).

1.3 To celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee a new bank holiday has been added on Friday 3 June 2022 and the late May bank holiday weekend moved to Thursday 2 June 2022. This is reflected in the calendar published on the ESCC website (appendix 1). In East Sussex the additional bank holiday falls in the school spring break (half-term break) when schools will already be closed.

1.4 The government have [laid regulations \[the Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021\]](#) resulting in a temporary reduction in the length of the school year in 2021/2022. As set out in the explanatory memorandum at appendix 2.

'The reduction in the minimum number of sessions in the academic year 2021/22 is to enable schools to close for the additional bank holiday on 3 June 2022 to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. There are no expectations for schools to make up these sessions. The amendment to regulations will mean that schools will not be at risk of breaching their statutory duty to meet for 380 sessions.'

This would mean that the length of the standard school year will be reduced from a total of 195 days to 194 (189 pupil days and five INSET days).

1.5 This amendment is like previous amendments when additional bank holidays were given for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (5 June 2012) and the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (29 April 2011). The impact of the additional bank holidays also saw a reduction in the number of sessions resulting in a reduction of the total number of school days from 195 to 194.

1.6 There are likely to be consequential changes to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document 2021/22 (STPCD) due to the additional bank holiday for 2022 (unlikely to be published in draft until at least late July) in accordance with previous years.

1.7 The option of not reducing the total number of school days from 195 to 194 is likely to contravene the information to be published in the draft STPCD. Arrangements need to be put into place to ensure that the schools' workforce benefit from the additional bank holiday if the date falls in the school holidays. This is not a matter for consultation with trade unions locally at this stage because the draft STPCD (when published in July) will contain information on how the arrangements for the platinum jubilee will apply to schools. The national unions will be able to comment on the STPCD in the normal way.

1.8 Once a decision on the actual date of the additional bank holiday is agreed for those in educational settings, the trade unions will be advised of this at the same time it is advertised to schools and other relevant Council services.

2. Options to reduce the number of school days

2.1 Some local authorities are consulting with schools on options to reduce the number of school days by, for example:

- a) Extending the early May bank holiday by making Tuesday 3 May 2022 a non-working day. The Department are not supportive of this option given the following week is SATs week.
- b) Extending the half-term break by making Friday 27 May or Monday 6 June 2022 a non-school day. At this stage, and pending the publication of further guidance, it is unlikely for there to be any compulsion for schools to organise the day in lieu close to the additional bank holiday e.g. prior to the half term break on either 27 May or following it on 6 June. The Department are also not supportive of this option because extending the half term break may impact negatively on attendance.
- c) Finishing the school year earlier, on Thursday 21 July 2022, extending the summer break by one day (as discussed elsewhere in this report). The Department believes this option provides the least disruption to pupil's learning.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The additional bank holiday on 3 June 2022 falls within the East Sussex school term and holiday dates for 2021/2022. The expectation is that arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the schools' workforce benefit from the additional bank holiday if the date falls in the school holidays. This would mean that the total number of school days is reduced from 195 to 194.

3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to approve that the academic year 2021/2022 finishes one day early, on Thursday 21 July 2022.

3.3 The school term and holiday calendar for 2021/2022 will be updated to reflect the decision. Schools, relevant services, and other key stakeholders will be notified of the decision.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: East Sussex school term and holiday dates 2021/2022.

Appendix 2: Explanatory Memorandum to The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.