HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Education								
Date:	19 October 2023								
Title:	School Term and Holiday Dates for 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 Academic Years								
Report From:	Director of Children's Services								

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive Member for Education on the need to decide the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, to note some changes to this process adopted by the County Council and to note the outcomes of the consultation process that has been followed.

Recommendation

- 2. It is recommended that the Executive Member for Education:
- 3. Approves the school term and holiday dates that have been consulted upon with all schools and considered by the County Council's Schools Union Group, for the school year 2025/26, as set out in appendix 2 of the report, with an adjustment to the start date of the autumn term from 1 September 2025 to 3 September 2025 and an adjustment to the end date of the autumn term from 17 December 2025 to 19 December 2025.
- 4. Approves the school term and holiday dates that have been consulted upon with all schools and considered by the County Council's Schools Union Group, for the school years 2026/27 and 2027/28 as set out in appendix 2 of the report.

Executive Summary

5. This report seeks to inform the Executive Member for Education on the need to decide the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, and recommends the term and holiday dates that have been subject to a consultation process with Hampshire schools.

Contextual information

- 6. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days (380 sessions) and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The structure for delivering this entitlement has been the subject of national and local debate for many years. The Local Government Association (LGA) National Standing Committee on the School Year has, in the past, been active in seeking to establish a National School Year but this process has now ended.
- 7. In previous years, Hampshire has determined the school year 18 months before the start of each school year, with the 2024/25 school year determined in February 2023 by the Executive Member, following consultation with Hampshire schools and staff and engagement with the Conditions of Service Working Party (CoSWoP).
- 8. A new approach has been adopted by the County Council to determine the school year, to support longer term planning for schools, senior leaders and staff, as well as for parents and the Local Authority which entails determining several school years in advance. It also includes engaging and seeking views and comments from the Schools Union Group as this is considered more representative of the entire schools' workforce.
- 9. The effect of these changes is that:
- 10. three school years have been proposed, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 for the Executive Member decision day on 19 October 2023.
- 11. In autumn 2024, the school year 2028/29 will be consulted on and brought to the Executive Member Decision Day for determination. This will continue annually, when the school year approximately four years away will be determined to support long term planning in the Hampshire school system.
- Legal advice has been sought and considered before the County Council adopted this new approach. The approach is consistent with several other Local Authorities in England.
- 13. The Joint Council for Qualifications have confirmed that GCSE and A-level examinations are not scheduled during the week of the late Spring Bank Holiday in May. Therefore, examinations would not be scheduled on the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of Friday of that week.
- 14. The proposals for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 are attached to this document as appendix 2. The proposed school years try to take account of balanced half terms for holiday periods where possible, including trying to ensure two full weeks for both the Christmas and Easter holidays, including three weekends across both. The other dates for holidays fit a sensible pattern based on the positioning of the Easter weekend and the bank holidays

in May.

Finance

15. There are no financial implications.

Performance

- 16. The determination of dates several years in advance, supports longer term planning for schools, senior leaders, and staff, as well as the County Council.
- 17. The early determination of dates enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised. Children benefit from good attendance in school; it supports educational achievement and lays the foundation for a positive contribution to society and economic well-being. Properly structured periods of learning and rest help children to remain healthy, enjoy their school time and achieve more.

Consultation and Equalities

- 18. The Schools Union Group were invited to comment on the proposed pattern of dates at their meeting on Tuesday 19 September 2023. The group discussed the impact of the changing Easter date on the length of some terms, how going from an early Easter Sunday (as in March 2027) to a late Easter Sunday (as in April 2028), made the intervening year more demanding for staff and with reference to March 2027 asked if any work had been done to understand the impact on attendance of finishing on Maundy Thursday. The group however accepted these factors were largely outside of the County Council's control due to the changing Easter date. There was some general discussion about how length of term can affect exam preparation, but the group were supportive of the move to determining the school year several years in advance to support long term planning, and that in each year there were three weekends during the Christmas holidays, and two full weeks to give staff a good break after a long autumn term.
- 19. Schools were invited to comment on the proposed pattern of dates via a Schools' Communication dated 4 September 2023, comments being required by 29 September 2023. The full comments from three schools are provided in Appendix 1 and are summarised below:
- 20. One school suggested it would be better to finish the autumn term on 19 December 2025, and then to finish the academic year on Monday 20 July 2026, which would reduce the length of the summer term and reduce exhaustion. Another school commented on the early start to the academic year on each of the proposed years and raised the impact of partial weeks on attendance. A further school commented on the start date of the autumn term in September 2025 creating a very long first half term. It was suggested that the term could start two days later on 3 September 2025 and then conclude

two days later on 19 December 2025.

- 21. Regarding the first response, the impact of a long academic year in the summer was acknowledged, and it was agreed that most schools would use a standalone Monday before the summer holidays as an inset day. However, there was concern about increasing what was already a very long autumn term, alongside worries about attendance should a school choose not to have an inset day on the Monday before the summer holidays.
- 22. Regarding the second response, it was acknowledged that each proposed calendar started on September 1, but no summer holidays were shorter in length than 5 weeks and 3 days, and there was potential that by starting the autumn term later, the summer term would finish very late in July. It was noted that partial weeks are inevitable during the school year due to bank holidays, and the requirement to have 195 school days.
- 23. Regarding the third response, the autumn term is the longest term each year and it was acknowledged that eight weeks is a long half term to start. This adjusted proposal would lead to a summer holiday in 2025 of six weeks in length, and a late finish before the Christmas holidays, but the merit in the proposal was acknowledged. The school also commented on the short spring 2 term in 2027 being only four weeks and four days long, and the impact this had on GCSE preparation, but agreed that this was due to Easter being so early in 2027.
- 24. Therefore, all comments were considered, and it was proposed that the school year calendar be adjusted for the 2025/26 academic year from that proposed in the consultation. The effect of this would be that the autumn term starts later on Wednesday 3 September 2025 and concludes later on Friday 19 December 2025, which would reduce the first half of the autumn term and provide a better balance for staff and pupils during that term. The two schools who responded with differing views were contacted for their view on this adjustment and they agreed that this provided a better balance for staff and pupils in the 2025 autumn term. The other proposed term dates issued as part of the consultation have not been adjusted as it was considered that they continued to provide the best balance overall.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

25. The decision for this report is to confirm the calendar that will apply to the School Years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. It applies the usual restrictions of 195 days for teacher attendance and 190 days of pupil attendance (380 sessions in the school year). The carbon mitigation tool and/or climate change adaptation tool was not applicable because the decision to be made is strategic/administrative in nature.

Conclusions

26. The proposed patterns, in Appendix 2, with the amendment to the 2025/26 calendar, as outlined in section 15, are recommended to the Executive Member for Education as accepted by the schools and best meeting the requirements that are applied to designing the school year for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives									
<u>Title</u>									
Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance The Education Act 2002 - section 32 The Education Act 1996 – section 551(1) The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999									

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document	Location
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionally low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The school year will apply to all voluntary controlled and community schools. It will form the basis for the school year in Hampshire academies, foundation, and voluntary aided schools (which are able to set their own school year). It is also utilised by sixth form providers. The setting of the school year has a neutral impact for all the protected characteristic groups and other policy consideration groups.

Appendix 1:

Consultation Comments:

School 1

"Regarding the 25/26, 26/27 and 27/28 school holiday proposals, please find the following comments.

2025/2026 - Would it not make more sense to work the 18th and 19th December 2025 week to make that a full 7 week half term, and then put those holiday dates back to 21st and 22nd July 2026? (We understand that this would then leave Monday 20th July 2026 as a working day and schools would then most likely use that as an INSET day. This would keep the Sum 2 half term to 7 weeks. We have had several comments from parents / carers in our feedback that the children have had enough and are exhausted by then. If the 20th to 22nd July are kept as school days, I can see that parents and carers will just take their families away for those days and not be fined as they aren't 10 sessions.

Thank you in advance of considering our feedback."

School 2

"As a school we would like to share our views on the next three years calendar.

For the past few years and for the next two, the County Council's insistence on starting the school year ever earlier in September is resulting in disjointed weeks of holiday for school staff. Some weeks leaving only four weeks of holiday together. This would be resolved if an adjustment to previous date patterns was made. This would be easily conducted in the first year with the removal of the longer Christmas break.

The current pattern over the past few years, and in these plans, leaves partial weeks where parents/cares are more likely to remove children from school to save funds when travelling. Similarly the same situation was forced upon us this year, with school's being forced to use a day as an INSET to prevent these absence types."

School 3

"Here is some feedback concerning School terms which are planned;

2025-2026

First half term is 8 weeks. This is very long. Suggestion – Start on 3rd Sept and work to Dec 19th inc. This will give better balance on half terms and still have a two-week Christmas holiday.

2026-2027

Spring 2 term is only 4.5 weeks which puts much pressure on GCSE preparation and coursework subjects. I appreciate that it is due to Easter dates being so early but this does have an impact operationally.

Thank you for the opportunity to consult on this."

Appendix 2: The proposal for 2025/26

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Т	4	11	18	25			Т	2	9	16	23	30	Т		6	13	20	27	
F	5	12	19	26			F	3	10	17	24 #	31	F		7	14	21	28	
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W		4	11	18	25		W	1	8	15	22	29	W			6	13	20	27
T		5	12	19	26		Т	2	9	16	23	30	Т			7	14	21	28
F		6	13	20	27 #		F	3	10	17	24		F		1	8	15	22#	29
S		7	14	21	28		S	4	11	18	25		S		2	9	16	23	30
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Bank and Public Holidays 2025/2026

25 December 2025 Christmas Day Easter Monday 6 April 2026 4 May 2026 26 December 2025 May Day Holiday **Boxing Day** New Year's Day Holiday 1 January 2026 Spring Bank Holiday 25 May 2026 31 August 2026 Good Friday 3 April 2026 Summer Bank Holiday

k	First day after break	School Holidays	Bank Holidays and National Holidays

Last day before break

Autumn Term 2025 starts on Monday 1 September 2025 and ends on Wednesday 17 December 2025 (Half term from Monday 27 October to Friday 31 October 2025)

Spring Term 2026 starts on Monday 5 January 2026 and ends on Friday 27 March 2026 (Half term from Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February 2026)

Summer Term 2026 starts on Monday 13 April 2026 and ends on Wednesday 22 July 2026 (Half term from Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May 2026)

Term	Start date	End Date								
Autumn 2025	1 September 2025	17 December 2025								
Autumii 2023	Half term 27 October- 31 October 2025									
Spring 2026	5 January 2026	27 March 2026								
Spring 2026	Half term 16 February - 20 February 2026									
Summer 2026	13 April 2026	22 July 2026								
Summer 2020	Half term 25 May – 29 May 2026									

The proposal for 2026/27

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Bank and Public Holidays 2026/2027

Christmas Day Boxing Day New Year's Day Holiday Good Friday 25 December 2026 26 December 2026 1 January 2027 26 March 2027 Easter Monday May Day Holiday Spring Bank Holiday Summer Bank Holiday

29 March 2027 3 May 2027 31 May 2027 30 August 2027

*	First day	after break
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School Holiday
Scribbi Holiday

Bank Holidays and National Holidays

Last day before break

Autumn Term 2026 starts on Tuesday 1 September 2026 and ends on Friday 18 December 2026 (Half term from Monday 26 October to Friday 30 October 2026)

Spring Term 2027 starts on Monday 4 January 2027 and ends on Thursday 25 March 2027 (Half term from Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February 2027)

Summer Term 2027 starts on Monday 12 April 2027 and ends on Wednesday 21 July 2027 (Half term from Monday 31 May to Friday 4 June 2027)

Term	Start date	End Date								
A. A	1 September 2026	18 December 2026								
Autumn 2026	Half term 26 October- 30 October 2026									
Spring 2027	4 January 2027	25 March 2027								
Spring 2027	Half term 15 February - 19 February 2027									
Summer 2027	12 April 2027	21 July 2027								
Sullillei 2021	Half term 31 May – 4 June 2027									

The proposal for 2027/28

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Т		6	13	20	27	Т		4	11	18	25		Т	1	8	15	22	29
W		7	14	21	28	W		5	12	19	26		w	2	9	16	23	30
Т	1	8	15	22	29	Т		6	13	20	27		Т	3	10	17	24	31
F	2	9	16	23	30	F		7	14	21 #	28		F	4	11	18	25	
S	3	10	17	24		S	1	8	15	22	29		S	5	12	19	26	
S	4	11	18	25		S	2	9	16	23	30		S	6	13	20	27	

Bank and Public Holidays 2027/2028

Christmas Day Boxing Day New Year's Day Holiday Good Friday 25 December 2027 26 December 2027 3 January 2028 14 April 2028 Easter Monday May Day Holiday Spring Bank Holiday Summer Bank Holiday

17 April 2028 1 May 2028 29 May 2028 28 August 2028

*	First day after break	School Holidays	Bank Holidays and National Holidays

Last day before break

Autumn Term 2027 starts on Wednesday 1 September 2027 and ends on Friday 17 December 2027

(Half term from Monday 25 October to Friday 29 October 2027)

Spring Term 2028 starts on Tuesday 4 January 2028 and ends on Friday 31 March 2028 (Half term from Monday 14 February to Friday 18 February 2028)

Summer Term 2028 starts on Tuesday 18 April 2028 and ends on Friday 21 July 2028 (Half term from Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June 2028)

Term	Start date	End Date						
Autumn 2027	1 September 2027	17 December 2027						
Autumn 2027	Half term 25 October- 29 October 2027							
Spring 2029	4 January 2028	31 March 2028						
Spring 2028	Half term 14 February - 18 February 2028							
Summer 2028	18 April 2028	21 July 2028						
Summer 2026	Half term 29 May – 2 June 2028							

The adjusted proposal for 2025/26 following consultation with schools and unions

	S	EPT	EMBI	ER 202	25				ОСТ	OBER	2025	5			N	IOVEN	IBER	2025	
М	1	8	15	22	29		М		6	13	20	27	М		3*	10	17	24	
Т	2	9	16	23	30		Т		7	14	21	28	Т		4	11	18	25	
W	3*	10	17	24			w	1	8	15	22	29	w		5	12	19	26	
Т	4	11	18	25			Т	2	9	16	23	30	Т		6	13	20	27	
F	5	12	19	26			F	3	10	17	24 #	31	F		7	14	21	28	
S	6	13	20	27			s	4	11	18	25		S	1	8	15	22	29	
S	7	14	21	28			S	5	12	19	26		S	2	9	16	23	30	
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W	3	10	17	24	31		w		7	14	21	28	w		4	11	18	25	
Т	4	11	18	25			Т	1	8	15	22	29	Т		5	12	19	26	
F	5	12	19 #	26			F	2	9	16	23	30	F		6	13#	20	27	
S	6	13	20	27			S	3	10	17	24	31	s		7	14	21	28	
S	7	14	21	28			S	4	11	18	25		S	1	8	15	22		
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W		4	11	18	25		w	1	8	15	22	29	w			6	13	20	27
Т		5	12	19	26		Т	2	9	16	23	30	Т			7	14	21	28
F		6	13	20	27		F	3	10	17	24		F		1	8	15	22#	29
S		7	14	21	28		S	4	11	18	25		S		2	9	16	23	30
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Bank and Public Holidays 2025/2026

Christmas Day Boxing Day New Year's Day Holiday Good Friday 25 December 202526 December 20251 January 20263 April 2026

Easter Monday May Day Holiday Spring Bank Holiday Summer Bank Holiday 6 April 2026 4 May 2026 25 May 2026 31 August 2026

*	First	day	after	break
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Bank Holidays and National Holidays

Last day before break

Autumn Term 2025 starts on Wednesday 3 September 2025 and ends on Friday 19 December 2025 (Half term from Monday 27 October to Friday 31 October 2025)

Spring Term 2026 starts on Monday 5 January 2026 and ends on Friday 27 March 2026 (Half term from Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February 2026)

Summer Term 2026 starts on Monday 13 April 2026 and ends on Wednesday 22 July 2026 (Half term from Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May 2026)

Term	Start date	End Date						
Autumn 2025	3 September 2025	19 December 2025						
Autumii 2023	Half term 27 October- 31 October 2025							
Spring 2026	5 January 2026	27 March 2026						
Spring 2026	Half term 16 February - 20 February 2026							
Summer 2026	13 April 2026	22 July 2026						
Summer 2020	Half term 25 May – 29 May 2026							