

REPORT TO: Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 12th June 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: School Term and Holiday Dates

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the statutory requirements for the Local Authority in determining school term and holiday dates and sets out some of the issues faced when seeking to determine term/holiday dates.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) The Policy & Performance Board support the principles for setting term time set out in paragraph 3.4.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The setting of term dates and holidays, in England, is the responsibility of the employer. For community and voluntary controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained nursery schools the employer is the Local Authority. For foundation and voluntary aided schools the governing body is responsible for setting dates, and for free schools and academy trusts, the academy trust is responsible for determining the dates. Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002, the Local Authority shall determine the dates when school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community and voluntary controlled schools.

3.2 The Education (School Day and School Year)(England) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 3181) requires schools to have at least 380 half-day sessions (190 days) in each school year. This is consistent with the 195 days a year required by a teacher's statutory conditions of service: the additional five days are for in-service training (known as INSET days).

3.3 Circa 2009, nine Directors of Children's Services within the North-West (including Halton) agreed to determine a set of principles with regard to the setting of terms dates. This was to seek to provide

some consistency across bordering local authorities and encourage school attendance.

3.4 The principles agreed were:

- All terms to start on a Monday (or a Tuesday if so necessitated by a Bank Holiday)
- February half term will always be the third week in February
- Easter Break will be renamed the Spring break and will always be the first two full weeks in April
- Easter will always be observed via the bank holidays for Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Where a school is open for part of a week to pupils, this will be for a minimum of three school days (to encourage attendance)
- The five INSET teacher training days are all to be designated by the individual school governing body, but there will be no more than two days (in any one term) set consecutively for this purpose.

3.5 Some neighbouring Local Authorities have slightly amended some of their term dates/holiday dates from the above principles. However, the majority of dates remain as originally agreed.

3.6 Establishing term dates in advance maximises wellbeing by helping schools and families to plan learning more effectively. Children benefit from good attendance in school, in particular it supports educational achievement. The publication of dates well in advance enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised.

3.7 Whilst there is no requirement to do so, the Local Authority is proposing to consult community and voluntary controlled schools (for whom the Local Authority is the employer) during the Autumn Term 2017 on proposed dates for 2019/20. If the schools value this approach, it will also be considered for subsequent years.

3.8 The Local Authority recognises that, unfortunately, regardless of whichever dates are determined, it will not be possible to satisfy all those for whom the setting of term dates impacts upon, but by consulting those staff for whom the Local Authority is the employer, a consensus will be reached.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The setting of School Term and holiday dates is a statutory

requirement for the Local Authority as the employer for community and voluntary controlled schools, and for Governing Board/Trusts of academy schools, free schools and voluntary aided schools.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Whilst voluntary aided schools, academy schools and free schools are entitled to determine their own dates as the Governing Board/Trust is the employer, it is hoped that those schools will also consider adopting the proposed term/holiday dates, but there is no requirement for them to do so.

5.2 There are no financial implications for this report. The setting of School dates is a statutory requirement.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The principles originally agreed were in place to encourage school attendance.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Educational achievement is critical to the life chances of all children in the Borough and attendance helps to maximise educational opportunity.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 As the employer, the Local Authority is responsible for the setting of school term and holiday dates for community and voluntary controlled schools. Through consulting with community and voluntary controlled schools a consensus will be reached.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals meet any requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

9.0

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
The Education (School Day and School Year)(England) Regulations 1999	People Directorate	Martin West
Education Act 2002	People Directorate	Martin West