

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	CLH 33/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 22 August 2018

Report Title: **School Term Dates**

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information in relation to the current arrangement for setting school term dates, and to seek Members' agreement to consult on moving to a fixed Easter break in schools.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to:

- i. note the current position in respect of school term dates; and
- ii. agree to a review of the process to consider the anticipated benefit of moving to a fixed school Easter holiday in the first 2 weeks of April each year

3. Background

In Scotland, each local authority sets its own school term dates and in-service days, ensuring schools are open for 190 pupil days plus 5 in-service days every year. In Highland, these dates are set in consultation with schools, and are agreed at the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers Executive on an annual basis. We operate a standard school calendar for all schools and dates are published on the Council website. These can be found at https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates. School term dates have previously been agreed up to session 2020/21.

4. Current Position

4.1 The current approach is that school holiday dates are set according to the following provisions:

- Schools do not start a new session before the 3rd Tuesday in August
- October holidays are for 2 weeks, to include the National MOD
- Christmas holidays are 2 weeks, to include public holidays on 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January
- The mid-term break is the 3rd Monday and Tuesday in February, and this is followed by an in-service day
- Easter holidays are a minimum of 2 weeks, to include Good Friday and Easter Monday, and are dependent on when Easter falls

4.2 The proposal to identify a fixed school holiday in the first 2 weeks in April has been considered for some time, and it became evident when agreeing school term dates this session, that Headteachers are keen to move to this model. It is understood that various local authorities have already adopted this pattern, and indeed in most Councils across the Regional Improvement Collaborative, the Easter holiday period is set for the first 2 weeks in April regardless of when Easter falls.

5. Key Issues

5.1 A fixed Easter holiday period would:

- better equalise the spring and summer terms, as dates would not be dependent on Good Friday and Easter Monday,
- provide the benefit of a consistent preparation period for secondary schools, prior to the start of SQA examinations,
- enable improved future planning for schools and parents,
- require pupils to return following the Easter break, but for schools to close again on Good Friday and Easter Monday where Easter falls out with the first two weeks in April.

5.2 It is intended that Headteachers are further consulted as part of this review, as well as parent councils and LNCT representatives.

6. Implications

6.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications.

6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

There are no community implications.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

There are no climate change/carbon clever implications.

6.5 Risk

There are no risk implications.

6.6 Gaelic

There are no known Gaelic implications arising as a direct result of this report.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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Date: 13 August 2018