

**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2026****LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL TERM DATES**
AUTUMN 2027 TO SUMMER 2032**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on three potential models for Leicestershire school term and holiday dates covering the period from autumn 2027 to summer 2032 for schools maintained by the local authority.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - a) Approve a consultation to be undertaken on the proposed term date models for Leicestershire for the academic years 2027/28 to 2031/32, attached as Appendix A to this report;
 - b) Receive a further report in July 2026 presenting the outcomes of the consultation and the recommended term date model.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Education Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on the County Council to determine the number of school days that schools under its control must open. The County Council is required to determine a pattern that ensures at least 380 sessions (190 days) during each school year.
4. A public consultation will seek feedback on three potential term date models to inform a recommended model for implementation.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

5. It is proposed to hold a 6-week consultation on the potential term date models. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, this will commence on 20 April and run until 31 May 2026.

6. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report as part of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 2 June 2026.
7. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 21 July 2026 summarising consultation feedback and presenting a recommended term date model for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. Term dates are determined by school employers following public consultation, as is set out in the Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999.
9. As the local authority is the employer for community, voluntary controlled and community special schools, any changes to agreed term time dates proposed by such schools must be agreed in advance by the Director of Children and Family Services.
10. Leicestershire's term dates were last reviewed by the Cabinet in September 2021 when it was agreed that they would follow the traditional Leicestershire pattern for the period autumn 2022 to summer 2027.

Resource Implications

11. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of implementing the agreed term time pattern following approval by the Cabinet forms part of the existing Children and Family Services budget allocation.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Officers to Contact

Tim Browne, Interim Director of Education
 Children and Family Services
 Telephone: 0116 305 0546
 Email: tim.browne@leics.gov.uk

Renata Chantrill, Head of Service, Education Sufficiency
 Children and Family Services
 Telephone: 0116 305 0356
 Email: renata.chantrill@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

13. The local authority is responsible for setting school term dates for all maintained schools, which includes all community and voluntary controlled schools and community special schools, under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
14. In March 2026, there are 285 state-funded schools in Leicestershire. Of these, 24% are maintained, including 65 primary schools and 2 special schools. All other state-funded schools within the County, including all secondary schools, are academies.
15. Following the Deregulation Act 2015, academies are responsible for setting their own term dates. In practice, the majority of schools in Leicestershire tend to follow the pattern set by Leicestershire County Council, although some schools have moved away from the traditional Leicestershire term date pattern.
16. Schools in England must be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year and 195 days for teachers.
17. Leicestershire County Council sets term date patterns for 190 days, providing all schools in the County, including those maintained by the Council, with the flexibility to identify five staff training days (often known as inset days) outside of the 190 days the school is open to pupils each academic year. While this approach is in contrast to neighbouring authorities who include suggested inset days in their term date patterns, it enables maintained schools to, where possible, align their inset days with other schools in their local area.
18. Home to school transport is provided on the days that schools are open to pupils.
19. The County Council works with Leicester City Council to set proposed dates for future academic years. This co-ordinated approach has been in place for a number of years and ensures that school term dates are aligned to minimise the impact on families and school transport providers working across both areas. Leicester City Council does include suggested inset days in their term date patterns and as such there are occasionally minor differences between the patterns.
20. The traditional term date pattern for Leicester and Leicestershire reflected the County's industrial heritage and included the *Leicestershire Workers' July Fortnight*, a county-wide holiday period introduced in 1965 where factories and businesses closed for the first two weeks of July to enable workers to avoid peak holiday periods. The July fortnight shutdown period is no longer widely observed as a result of the changing nature of employment and industry in the County.

21. Following the most recent term date consultation in 2021, Leicestershire maintained schools retained an early July finish to the school year, which is around two weeks earlier than some adjoining local authorities.

Proposed term date models for autumn 2027 to summer 2032

22. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have jointly developed three potential term date models for the five academic years between autumn 2027 and summer 2032. All proposed models provide for 190 school days. The proposed dates have also been shared with Rutland.
23. The proposed models for consultation include:
- **Model 1 (the Council's preferred option):** early annual autumn start, two-week autumn half term, more balanced terms, and a slightly shorter and earlier-than-average summer break.
 - **Model 2:** similar to model 1 but with a later summer break and a return to school date after the August bank holiday.
 - **Model 3:** keeps the historic pattern with a very early summer break but only a one-week autumn half term.
24. Many families like Leicestershire's traditional approach, which includes a very early summer break. This can mean cheaper family holidays, but some families face difficulties when children attending different schools in the same family, particularly around the County borders, follow different term time patterns.
25. The current 6-week summer break means schools in the County see a rise in child protection referrals; it also results in a loss of learning, and some families also struggle with the cost of childcare. The existing pattern includes terms of significantly different lengths, with a longer autumn term which children can struggle to manage, impacting their attendance, and shorter spring and summer terms.
26. The consultation will consider whether Leicestershire should keep the historic pattern or move to one of the alternative models listed above, which could help to address some of these concerns.
27. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have expressed a preference for model 1. This would continue to provide a relatively early summer break, maintaining one week of the traditional Leicestershire fortnight, enabling families to benefit from potentially cheaper holidays. A shorter summer holiday period may reduce the number of child protection referrals and will support families struggling with the cost of childcare and reduce learning loss over the break. This pattern will enable a two-week holiday during October, again potentially offering an opportunity for a cheaper or longer family holiday and ensuring more balanced term lengths throughout the rest of the school year.

28. All three options aim to ensure a similar number of days for the spring and summer terms. This means that while the Good Friday and Easter Monday bank holidays will be maintained and will be incorporated into the Easter holiday period, the two-week break may not always follow the traditional Easter pattern of the bank holidays being on the middle weekend of the two-week break. Depending on the timing of Easter, the Easter bank holidays may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the holiday period.

Consultation

29. A public consultation will seek feedback on the three potential term date models to inform a recommended model for implementation. This will run from 20 April to 31 May 2026 and will be carried out primarily using an online survey, which will also be available in accessible print versions on request.
30. The consultation will be aligned with a consultation on term dates for Leicester City Council. Both councils will be consulting on the same term date models; however, the consultations will run independently to the same time scales. As the City Council proposes inset days as part of its published pattern, there may be some small differences.
31. Consultation feedback will be jointly reviewed by officers from both Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council following the closure of the consultation period. Recommendations will be presented to their respective decision-making bodies with the intent of aligning term dates across both areas. Ultimate decision-making will remain the responsibility of each local authority.
32. It is intended that the Cabinet will receive a further report at its meeting on 21 July 2026, including a recommended term date model for approval.

Equality Implications

33. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed as part of the consultation process to consider the impact of the proposed term date patterns on individuals with protected characteristics. There are no adverse equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

34. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Partnership Implications

35. The proposed school term date patterns have been developed in partnership with Leicester City Council to ensure alignment across both areas.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17 September 2021 "Leicestershire School Term-Time Patterns from Autumn 2022 To Summer 2027"

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s163631/Term%20Dates%20Consultation.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed school term date consultation document