

School Session Dates for the Academic Year 2017/18**Report by Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities & Economy****1 Introduction**

This paper refers to the setting of school session dates for academic year 2017/18.

2 Background

Midlothian Council has recommended that the session dates for Midlothian schools be synchronised with our neighbouring council areas in particular with the City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council, bearing in mind some differences in local holidays.

Council Officers have sought to align school session dates more closely with neighbouring local authorities, mainly Edinburgh and East Lothian. For school session 2017/18 Edinburgh and East Lothian have set their return date as Monday 14th August 2017. If Midlothian were to set the same return date it would result in 14 teacher days in August 2017 and 199 working days in the 2016/17 teacher leave year. Within the parameters set by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) teachers cannot work more or less than 195 days in the leave year. The implication of this for school session dates is that the number of teaching days in August cannot vary from year to year if they are to comply with the SNCT Handbook.

Following significant discussion on this matter at the Midlothian Negotiating Committee for Teachers (MNCT) the management side wrote to SNCT requesting them to determine if there are exceptions or developments which would permit more than 195 days for teachers to fall within the teacher leave year.

The response from the SNCT Joint Secretary has reiterated the relevant section from the SNCT Handbook “that the leave year for teachers and music instructors *“shall run from 1 September in any year until 31 August the following year” (Part 2, paragraph 5.1) and the working year “shall consist of 195 days of which 190 will coincide with the school year for pupils with the remaining 5 days being worked by the individual teachers on duties as planned by the Council” (Part 2, paragraph 3.5).*”

The letter further confirms that in the leave year teachers cannot work more or less than 195 days and that the Council should work within the parameters set by SNCT. In other words, the leave year in 2017-18 must comply with the Handbook. (Appendix 3)

In procedural terms, if Midlothian Council does not accept the advice of the Joint Secretaries, the next step is to refer the matter to the Joint Chairs for determination. It is proposed that this course of action is pursued and the outcome reflected in the setting of school session dates for 2018/19 and future years.

The setting of school session dates for 2017/18 is required imminently so time does not permit this course of action to be pursued for the 2017/18 school session. The first day of the 2017/18 school session is therefore determined, in line with the SNCT handbook, to be Friday 18 August 2017.

The possible 2017/18 school session dates, which are attached to this report (Appendix 1 & 2), have been drawn up with a start date of Friday 18 August 2017. These school session dates coincide across the three authorities on the timing of the October, Christmas and Easter breaks and on the last day of the school session which will be Friday 29 June 2018.

Officers will consult with staff and parents on the preferred dates for the February break. One option will have a February break of one week for pupils and a break of three days for staff. The other option will have a break of two days for pupils and a one day break for staff. Edinburgh and East Lothian will have a full week break for both staff and pupils in February 2018. This break will take place in the same week in February in all three authorities.

Officers will present the preferred school session dates for approval to the June meeting of Council.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 Risk

By aligning with neighbouring authorities risk implications are mitigated with regard to pupil attendance at school.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☒ None of the above

4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Session dates have been designed to maximise attendance by minimising the number of broken weeks for staff and pupils.

4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable.

4.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Consultation will be undertaken with parents and staff of school establishments as soon as agreement has been made on the preferred options being presented to the emergency MNCT group. Efforts have been made to synchronise session dates with the City of Edinburgh Council and East Lothian Council as far as possible.

4.7 Ensuring Equalities

The proposed report will have a neutral effect on equalities groups.

4.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

This proposal takes into account the need to deliver an educational service across Midlothian which anticipates and acknowledges the needs and views of stakeholders.

4.9 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

5 Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended:

- i. to agree the school session start date for 2017/18 as Friday, 18 August 2017;
- ii. to note that preferred school session dates will be presented for approval to the June meeting of Council;
- iii. to authorise officers to refer the matter of permitting more or less than 195 working days for teachers to fall within the teacher leave year to the Joint Chairs of SNCT for determination in the setting of school session dates for 2018/19.

20 May 2016

Report Contact: Sandra Banks

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Background Papers:

Appendix 1 - School Session Dates 2017/18

Appendix 2 - School Session Dates 2017/18 (including February week)

Appendix 3 - Failure to Agree Letter

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY

PROPOSED DAY SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2017 / 18

TERM 1	Staff Resume	Friday **	18	August	2017
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	22	August	2017
	Autumn Holiday	Friday	15	September	2017
		Monday	18	September	2017
	All Resume	Tuesday	19	September	2017
Mid Term	All Break	Friday	13	October	2017
	All Resume	Monday	23	October	2017
	Term Ends	Friday	22	December	2017
TERM 2	Staff Resume	Monday*	8	January	2018
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	9	January	2018
Mid Term	Pupils Break	Wednesday	14	February	2018
	Staff Break	Thursday*	15	February	2018
	All Resume	Monday	19	February	2018
	Term Ends	Thursday	29	March	2018
	<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>30th March</i>			
	<i>Easter Monday</i>	<i>2nd April</i>			
TERM 3	All Resume	Tuesday	17	April	2018
	May Day	Monday	7	May	2018
	All Resume	Tuesday	8	May	2018
	Victoria Day	Monday*	21	May	2018
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	22	May	2018
	Term Ends	Friday	29	June	2018

*** Staff In Service Days:** Friday 18th & Monday 21st August 2017,
Monday 8th January 2018,
Thursday 15th February 2018,
Monday 21st May 2018.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY

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TERM 1	Staff Resume	Friday **	18	August	2017
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	Term Ends	Friday	22	December	2017
TERM 2	All Resume	Monday	8	January	2018
Mid Term	Pupils Break	Friday	9	February	2018
	Staff Break	Tuesday**	13	February	2018
	All Resume	Monday	19	February	2018
	Term Ends	Thursday	29	March	2018
	<i>Good Friday</i>	<i>30th March</i>			
	<i>Easter Monday</i>	<i>2nd April</i>			
TERM 3	All Resume	Monday	16	April	2018
	May Day	Monday*	7	May	2018
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	8	May	2018
	Term Ends	Friday	29	June	2018

*** Staff In Service Days:** Friday 18th & Monday 21st August 2017,
Monday 12th & Tuesday 13th February 2018,
Monday 7th May 2018

Appendix 3

Dawn Farquhar
Jim Glen
MNCT Joint Secretaries

Ref: DM/EN
16 May 2016
dmorrice@eis.org.uk

Dear Dawn and Jim,

Your letter of 19 April has been discussed by the Employers' Side Joint Secretary and Teachers' Side Joint Secretary.

In procedural terms determination would lie with the Joint Chairs or full SNCT. The Joint Secretaries are able to provide initial advice which, if you do not accept, will be referred to the Joint Chairs.

You will be aware from the Handbook that the leave year for teachers and music instructors *"shall run from 1 September in any year until 31 August the following year"* (Part 2, paragraph 5.1) and the working year *"shall consist of 195 days of which 190 will coincide with the school year for pupils with the remaining 5 days being worked by the individual teachers on duties as planned by the Council"* (Part 2, paragraph 3.5).

In the leave year teachers cannot work more or less than 195 days. You have to work within the parameters set by SNCT. In other words, the leave year in 2017-18 must comply with the Handbook.

Yours sincerely

Drew Morrice
Joint Secretary