



Doncaster Council

School Holiday Pattern Consultation - FAQs

Why do you want to change the pattern?

As a council, we are required to set the school holiday pattern for the schools we are responsible for, which is currently 33 of the 128 schools in Doncaster (Academies and Church Schools who set their own patterns, are encouraged to use the same one but are not required to do so). Every year, more academies and surrounding councils are changing their school holidays and we are now out of sync with many of these. Now is an opportunity for us to consider a change.

Which schools would the proposed changes affect?

The change in school holiday patterns if chosen would only affect the 33 schools we as a council are currently responsible for which are listed below. However, Academies and Church Schools who set their own school holiday pattern are encouraged to use the same one.

- Barnburgh Primary School
- Bawtry Mayflower Primary School
- Bentley New Village Primary School
- Carcroft Primary School
- Copley Junior School
- Hatfield Sheep Dip Lane Primary Sch
- Hawthorn Primary School
- Hayfield Lane Primary School
- Kirkby Avenue Primary School
- Long Toft Primary School
- Mallard Primary School
- New Pastures Primary School
- North Ridge Community School
- Park Primary School
- Plover Primary School
- Rossington Tordedale Infant School
- Scawsby Saltersgate Infant School
- Scawsby Saltersgate Junior School
- Scawthorpe Castle Hills Primary School
- Scawthorpe Sunnyfields Primary School
- Sprotbrough Orchard Infant School
- Stainforth Kirton Lane Primary School
- Stone Hill School
- Thorne King Edward Primary School
- Tickhill Estfeld Primary School
- Toll Bar Primary School
- Town Field Primary School
- Wadworth Primary School
- Warmsworth Primary School
- Windhill Primary School
- Woodlands Primary School

Who has decided on the options you have put forward?

We have taken positive feedback from our neighbouring local authorities including Sheffield, Leeds and Nottinghamshire who have all successfully changed their school holidays patterns, and these proposed options have been drafted after working closely with representatives from a range of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Multi Academy Trusts.

What are the four options you are looking for feedback on?

- **OPTION 1 - We keep the existing school holiday pattern**
With this option, the existing school holiday pattern would stay the same with the following school closures:

October half term - 1 week
Christmas break - 2 weeks
February half term - 1 week
Easter break - 2 weeks
May half term - 1 week
Summer break - 6 weeks

- **OPTION 2 - We introduce a fixed Easter break**

With this option, we would introduce the following dates for school closures:

October half term - 1 week
Christmas break - 2 weeks
February half term - 1 week
*Easter break - 2 weeks - **this would always fall on the first two full weeks of April regardless of where the Easter holiday falls***
May half term - 1 week
Summer break - 6 weeks

- **OPTION 3 - We introduce a fixed Easter break with a two-week October half term and a five-week summer holiday, breaking up a week later than usual in July**

With this option, we would introduce the following dates for school closures:

October half term - 2 weeks
Christmas break - 2 weeks
February half term - 1 week
*Easter break - 2 weeks - **this would always fall in the first full two weeks of April regardless of where the Easter holiday falls***
May half term - 1 week
*Summer break - 5 weeks - **schools would break up a week later than usual in July***

- **OPTION 4 - We introduce a fixed Easter break with a two-week October half term and a five-week summer holiday, with pupils returning to school a week earlier, in August**

With this option, we would introduce the following dates for school closures:

October half term - 2 weeks
Christmas break - 2 weeks
February half term - 1 week
*Easter break - 2 weeks - **this would always fall in the first full two weeks of April regardless of where the Easter holiday falls***
May half term - 1 week
*Summer break - 5 weeks - **schools would return in the new academic year a week earlier in August***

What is the benefit to having a 'Fixed Easter Break'?

This would resolve issues that schools face when the Easter holiday falls later in the calendar which creates a long half term, and can affect SATs preparation. Changing this would allow for more 'even' spring half terms, more preparation time for SATs and consistent lengths for curriculum planning.

What is the benefit of having a 'two-week October'?

This is the longest of the three terms. Other schools in Doncaster and other local authority areas who have adopted a two-week autumn half term have reported positive impacts on school planning and attendance and has been well received. It also means that children will be away from school one week less in the summer which can help with the retention of skills and knowledge they may have gained in the previous school year, and reduces the amount of childcare parents/guardians need to arrange in the summer.