

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	20 February 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	School Holiday Pattern 2025 - 2030
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/24/044
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Caroline Johnstone
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee with a recommended school holiday pattern for school sessions 2025–2026 to 2029–2030.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 approves the proposed school holiday pattern to 2030 outlined in Appendix A of this report; and
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to publish details of the holiday pattern.

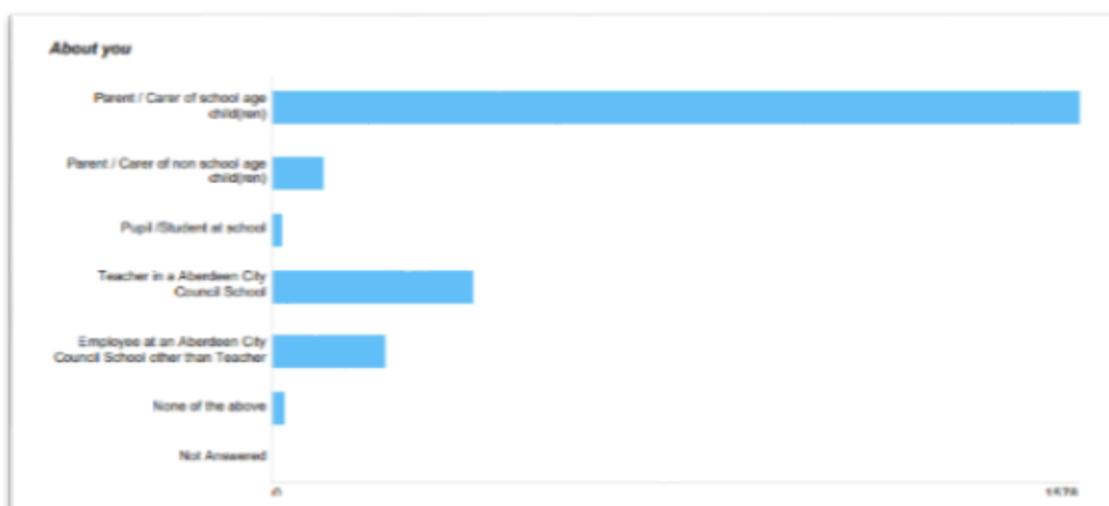
3. CURRENT SITUATION

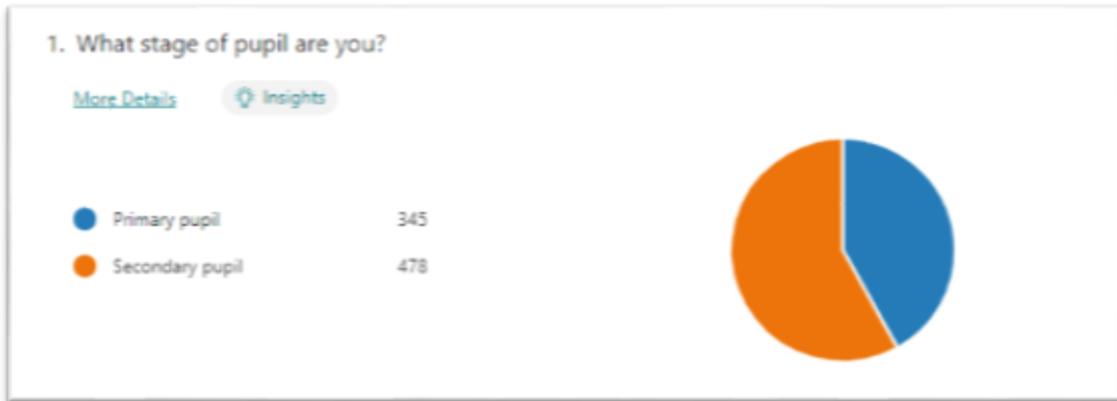
- 3.1 Committee last established a 5-year school holiday pattern in 2019. As a result, there is now a need to establish the Aberdeen City school holiday pattern for the next 5 years.
- 3.2 A recent online consultation was open to all parents, staff and pupils between 5th December 2023 and 5th January 2024. The questions posed were carefully considered to ensure that children and young people and families were able to fully engage with the process and inform the recommendation presented to Committee.
- 3.3 The consultations collected a combined total of 3156 responses, a decrease of 964 compared with previous survey in 2019. This lower response rate may be attributable to the relative increase in surveys and engagements since the last holiday pattern was established in 2019.
- 3.4 The statutory number of school openings is 190 days for pupils. In addition, teachers attend five in-service days on days when school is not open to pupils. The proposed holiday pattern available in Appendix A takes account of this requirement.

- 3.5 The proposed holiday pattern adheres to the general principle that, wherever possible, schools will open for complete weeks, rather than part-weeks, to minimise disruption to learning and teaching. However, in ensuring an appropriate balance, this is not always possible.
- 3.6 Aberdeenshire Council is Aberdeen City Council's only geographically adjacent local authority. Many staff work in one Local Authority area and live in the other. There is some movement of children and young people across the boundary, particularly at Dyce Academy, Bridge of Don Academy and Cults Academy, and it is reasonable to suggest that broad commonality between the holiday patterns of the two Councils is desirable.
- 3.7 Currently, the holiday pattern between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire is very similar, the only differences being the timing of local holidays (Aberdeenshire, for example, does not have the 'long' September weekend) and the dates of in-service days. We have worked closely with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council to create the holiday pattern recommended in this report, aligning the needs of both local authorities as far as possible.

FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTATION

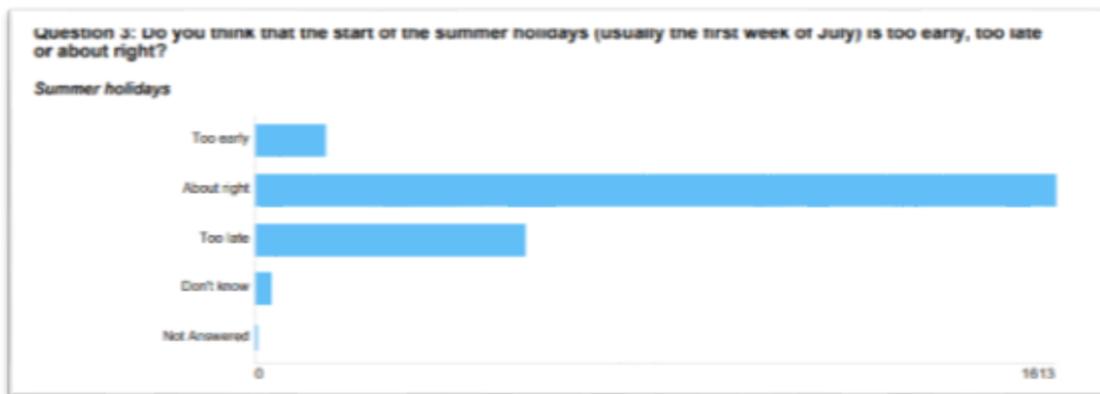
- 3.8 71.93% participating in the initial public consultation were parents (1578), with 26.23% school staff (612), with the remaining 1.84% (43) from children and young people in our education system or other.
- 3.9 The disappointing representation from children and young people has been attributed to the time of year the consultation was held. In order to ensure that the views of children and young people were accurately represented, a further consultation with children and young people ran from 10th January 2024 to 17th January 2024, this second survey secured 823 responses. 42% responses to the second survey of children and young people were from primary pupils and 58% were from secondary pupils. All 3156 responses from the two consultations have been considered in developing the proposed holiday pattern.





Summer holiday timing

- 3.10 69.14% (1613) of respondents to the public consultation feel the current timing of summer holidays is appropriate, this was by far the most popular response. Only 23.27% (543) feel this is too late. 44% (406) of pupils felt the current timing is appropriate (again the most prevalent response) whereas 38% (309) feel it is too late.

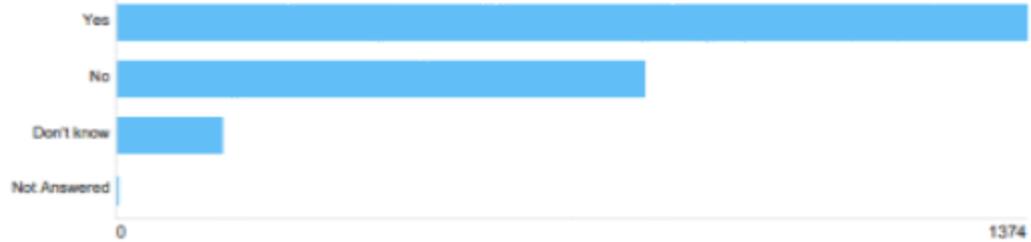


September weekend

- 3.11 A majority of respondents to the public consultation, 58.89% (1374), are happy with the traditional pattern of the September holiday weekend continuing with 34.12% (796) not in favour. 84% (689) of pupils are happy with this traditional pattern also, with only 11% (87) not in favour.

Question 4: Aberdeen has traditionally had a 'long weekend' in September – a holiday Friday / Monday. Do you think this should be continued?

September long weekend



4. Aberdeen has a long weekend in September-a holiday Friday / Monday. Do you think this should be continued?

[More Details](#)



October break timing

- 3.11 A large majority of respondents in the public consultation are happy with the length and timing of the October holiday with 79.85% (1863) supporting this. 16.42% (383) felt the October break is too long and 2.79% (65) felt it too short. Similarly, 51% (416) of pupils are happy with the length and timing of this holiday, while 42% (348) of pupils feel it is too short.

Question 6: Aberdeen currently has a two-week holiday, usually around the middle of October. Do you think that the length of the two-week holiday in October is too long, too short or about right?

October holidays



6. Aberdeen currently has a two week holiday, usually around the middle of October. Do you think that the length of the two week holiday in October is too long, too short or about right?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Too short	348
About the right length	416
Too long	43
Don't know	16

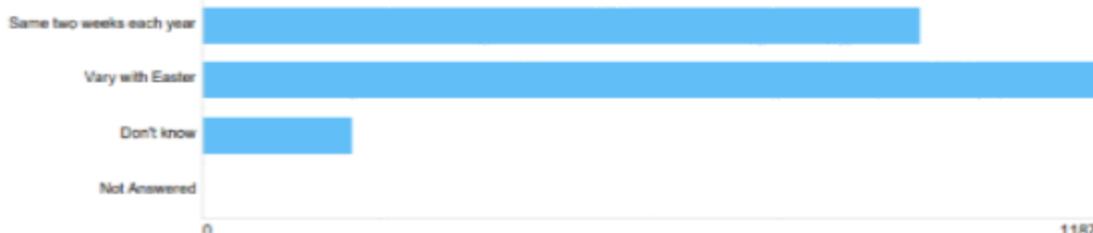


Easter holiday timing

- 3.12 88.26% (2059) of people who responded are happy with the length of the Easter holidays with 50.88% (1187) keen for the holidays to vary according to when Easter holiday falls. 55% (451) of pupils consulted are happy with the length of the Easter holidays, with 43% (357) keen for the holidays to vary according to when Easter falls.

Question 12: Do you think that the Spring (Easter) holiday should be at the same time each year, or vary according to when the Easter holiday falls?

Eas



12. Do you think that the Spring (Easter) holiday should be at the same time each year, or vary according to when Easter holiday falls?

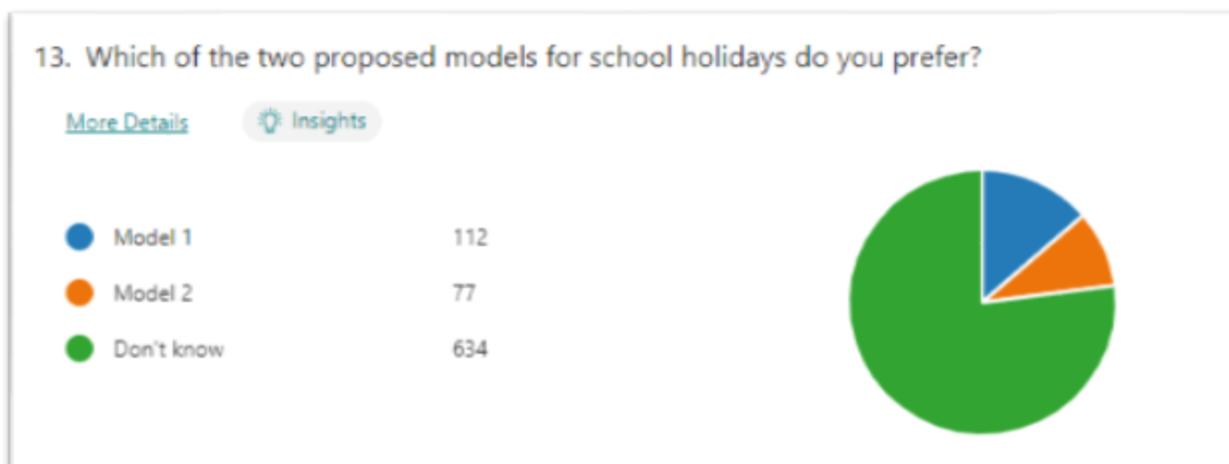
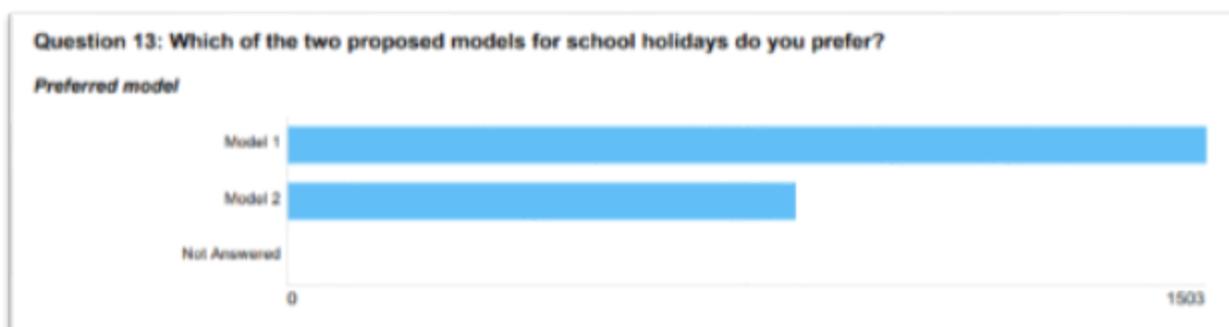
[More Details](#)

Same two weeks each year	335
Vary with Easter	357
Don't know	131



General holiday pattern

- 3.13 When provided with two potential models of holiday pattern for 2025-26 through to 2029-2030, 64.42% (1503) of the public opted for the traditional option similar to previous years with only 35.58% (830) selecting the newer pattern with increased in-service days in the summer term. 14% (112) pupils preferred the traditional pattern with 9% (77) in favour of the newer pattern. 77% (634) of pupils registered that they didn't know which model they preferred.



3.14 A majority of responses across the range of questions surveyed in both consultations, suggests that there is no appetite to change the general timing or length of the school holiday pattern, however the holiday pattern recommended has been more aligned with when Easter falls. The only exception to this is in 2030 when Good Friday falls very late on 19th April and moving the holiday to incorporate this would cause an adverse impact to the preparations for the SQA exam diet for schools. These responses have informed the recommendation for the proposed holiday pattern for the next 5 years.

3.15 **HOLIDAY PATTERN FROM 2025/26-2029/30**

The feedback from the consultation has informed the development of a proposed 5-year school holiday pattern as outlined in Appendix A. In response to the consultation findings, the proposed model:

- broadly mirrors the pattern already in place
- has aligned the Easter holiday more clearly with when Easter falls
- retains the September weekend
- is broadly aligned with Aberdeenshire's plans

3.16 The detailed holiday pattern being proposed is available in Appendix A.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The model outlined in Appendix A adheres to the need to provide 190 days of education on a yearly basis.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Risk of not agreeing holiday patterns in time to allow appropriate planning.	Agreeing holiday patterns in February will afford time for families to plan arrangements.	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with holiday entitlements for pupils and staff	The proposed holiday pattern complies with the legislation around the provision of 190 days of education.	L	Yes
Operational	Education service and schools not being able to plan effectively	Agreeing holiday patterns in February will afford time for families to plan arrangements.	L	Yes
Financial	None			Yes
Reputational	Not having clear dates in place in a timeous fashion.	Instructing the Chief Education Officer to advertise the agreed dates will mitigate this risk.	L	Yes

Environment / Climate	None			Yes
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8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposed holiday patterns within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes in the LOIP, which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Proposed School Holiday Pattern 2025-2026 to 2029-2030

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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APPENDIX 1 - Proposed School Holiday Pattern 2025-2026 to 2029-2030

Aberdeen City Council Draft School Holiday Pattern 2025-2026 to 2029-2030

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Term 1					
In-service day	Mon 18 August	Fri 14 August	Mon 23 August	Mon 21 August	Mon 20 August
Pupils return	Tues 19 August	Mon 17 August	Tues 24 August	Tues 22 August	Tues 21 August
September holiday	Fri 19 September and Mon 22 September	Fri 18 September and Mon 21 September	Fri 17 September and Mon 20 September	Fri 22 September and Mon 25 September	Fri 21 September and Mon 24 September
Term ends	Fri 10 October	Fri 9 October	Fri 8 October	Fri 13 October	Fri 5 October
October holiday	Mon 13 October – Fri 24 October	Mon 12 October – Fri 23 October	Mon 11 October - Fri 22 October	Mon 16 October – Fri 27 October	Mon 8 October – Fri 19 October
Term 2					
Term starts	Mon 27 October	Mon 26 October	Mon 25 October	Mon 30 October	Mon 22 October
In-service day	Fri 14 November	Fri 13 November	Fri 12 November	Fri 17 November	Fri 16 November
Term ends	Fri 19 December	Fri 18 December	Tues 21 December	Fri 22 December	Fri 21 December
Winter holiday	Mon 22 December – Fri 2 January	Mon 21 December – Fri 1 January	Wed 22 December – Tues 4 January	Mon 25 December – Fri 5 January	Mon 24 December – Fri 4 January
Term 3					
Term starts	Mon 5 January	Tues 5 January	Wed 5 January	Mon 8 January	Mon 7 January
Mid-term	Mon 9 February	Mon 8 February	Mon 14 February	Mon 12 February	Mon 11 February
In-service days	Tues 10 February and Wed 11 February	Tues 9 February and Wed 10 February	Tues 15 February and Wed 16 February	Tues 13 February and Wed 14 February	Tues 12 February and Wed 13 February
Term ends	Fri 27 March	Thurs 25 March	Fri 31 March	Thurs 29 March	Fri 29 March
Spring holiday	Mon 30 March – Fri 10 April (includes Good Friday on Fri 3 April)	Fri 26 March – Fri 9 April (includes Good Friday on 26 March)	Mon 3 April – Fri 14 April (includes Good Friday on 14 April)	Fri 30 March – Fri 13 April (includes Good Friday on 30 March)	Mon 1 April – Fri 12 April (excludes Good Friday on 19 April)
Term 4					
Term starts	Mon 13 April	Mon 12 April	Mon 17 April	Mon 16 April	Mon 15 April
Good Friday	-	-	-	-	Fri 19 April
May day holiday	Mon 4 May	Mon 3 May	Mon 1 May	Mon 7 May	Mon 6 May
In-service day	Tues 5 May	Tues 4 May	Tues 2 May	Tues 8 May	Tues 7 May
Term ends	Thurs 2 July	Fri 2 July	Thursday 6 July	Fri 6 July	Fri 5 July