

Norfolk School Calendar Proposal: 2016 and beyond

Context

The Government's draft Deregulation Bill moves all responsibility for determining term dates in schools from the local authority to the governing body. If approved (anticipated September 2015) the governing body of all such maintained schools will be responsible for determining their school's term and holiday dates each year as is the case now for all Aided, Foundation and Academy schools.

Norfolk County Council has always consulted with schools on the school calendars put in place for Norfolk. However, this new freedom for all schools represents a good opportunity to look anew at how the shape of the school year might work best for pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.

Nonetheless, serious difficulties could be incurred by schools taking an individual, isolated approach to the school calendar: for parents with children at different schools, for staff with children at other schools and for County transport.

Norfolk's three headteacher associations (NASSH, NPHA and NSEL) decided to facilitate a 'Cross-Phase Working Party' – containing representatives from schools in each academy group, diocese, phase, geographic area, and from FE, HE and Norfolk County Council – to take a coordinated approach in exploring options for a Norfolk model for 2016 and beyond.

Norfolk County Council has confirmed that transport will cater for the calendar endorsed by the majority of Norfolk schools.

1. Methodology

- The Cross-Phase Working Party met in January 2014 and a smaller group of volunteers were asked to form a Task & Finish Group to: **'Propose what term structure and transition models are in the best interests of pupils, based on soundly researched principles.'**
- T&F group comprised:

Mary Bartrop, Drake Infants	Jo Ryder, Norwich Road Academy
Rob Anthony, The Hewett School	Janine Birt, Norfolk County Council
Corrienne Peasgood, City College Norwich	Ian Clayton, Thorpe St Andrew High
Jenny Bird, Short Stay School for Norfolk	Helen Norton, NSEL & NPHA
- T&F group met twice between February and April 2014 to: pull together research, agree principles and develop models. A Survey Monkey questionnaire was sent to all schools to gauge thoughts on blocks of early transition time. The proposed model was shared with the wider Cross-Phase group on 1st May and approval was provided for presenting the option to other Norfolk schools.



2. Agreed Principles and Parameters

A set of 9 principles and parameters were agreed by the T&F group to use as a basis for modelling calendars:

Principle/Parameter	Comments/rationale
1. 190 teaching days, 5 staff training days (potentially disaggregated)	Statutory.
2. Equal term lengths where possible	
3. 2 week October half term	Address high levels of student and staff sickness absence. Issues of term time holiday.
4. 2 week Christmas break	
5. Opportunity for a 2 week break in February (depending on Easter BH falls)	Reasonable lead in to KS2 SATs and GCSEs.
6. Easter potentially a long weekend	Avoid yearly confusion on where Easter holidays are and implications for SOW and assessment planning.
7. Summer half term unmoveable and 1 week only	Due to KS1 Phonics and GCSE exams.
8. Longer run in to Summer holidays to incorporate optional 1, 2 or 3 week early transition blocks (local arrangements persist).	The outcome of the Survey Monkey questionnaire feedback offered no mandate for progress notion of a block of early transition time with just over 10% of schools completing the questionnaire.
9. 5 week Summer holiday acceptable	Balanced with the spread of holiday time during the year.





3. Proposed Norfolk School Calendar

A 3 year projection for the proposed model – from 2016 -17 to 2018 – 19 - can be seen in Appendix A. All agreed principles and parameters were applied to create this model.

4. Next Steps

- The initial views of Norfolk headteachers are being sought on whether there should be a Norfolk model and whether this option should be formally consulted on as the proposed Norfolk model.
- Headteachers can email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk with comments, questions or compelling alternatives by Monday 30th June 2014.
- If support is shown, the opinion of all schools will be canvassed via an online survey, to be completed by the end of this Term. Schools will also be asked whether they would like the LA to conduct the formal consultation on their behalf.
- Formal consultation would only then be considered if there is a strong consensus on a particular model.





Norfolk Cross-Phase Working Party, June 2014

Key	
	Holiday
	Bank Hol
	Possible Inset
	Optional transition blocks

Appendix A: School Calendar 3 Year Projection





2016-2017

2016-17	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	
August	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
September				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					
October						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
November		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
December				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
January							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
February			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28								
March			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
April						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			
May	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31							
June				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					
July						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		

Key	
	Holiday
	Bank Hol
	Possible Inset
	Optional transition blocks

2017-2018

2017-18	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T
August		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
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July							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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2018 - 2019

2018	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	
August			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
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