

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 17 November 2020

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Revision to School Session Dates 2020/21

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval to make a change to the dates for the current school session 2020/21 to align the dates for the festive period closure with our neighbouring authorities, namely City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council. The revision of dates also helps address any potential issues that may arise in relation to possible positive COVID19 cases and the requirement to carry out contact tracing amongst pupils and staff once schools have closed.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee is asked to approve the change to the school session dates for the festive break in the current school session, 2020/21, with the last day of this term being brought forward by one day to Tuesday 22nd December 2020 and for the start of the new term to be brought forward by one day to Wednesday 6th January 2021. This aligns East Lothian dates with those of our neighbouring authorities, City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The school session dates for 2020/21 were approved by Education Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2019.
- 3.2 With the current COVID19 pandemic having a significant impact on the daily operation of schools and the effects on our pupils and staff, the end

date for schools finishing for the festive break this year is very late, currently being Wednesday 23 December 2020.

- 3.3 Should we be notified of a positive COVID19 case in a school that week, the Health Protection Team require us to trace and contact all those who have been in close contact with the positive case up to 48hrs prior to the onset of symptoms. With this in mind, and with schools currently operating until Wednesday 23rd December, we then face a potential issue of being notified of a positive case on Christmas Day. This would then require access to management information systems within the central department as well as in schools together with the need to contact staff in order to carry out tracing on a Public Holiday.
- 3.4 A change to the term date to enable schools to close on Tuesday 22nd December will allow any positive cases arising up to and including Christmas Eve to be responded to directly by central Education officers during the working day and whilst there is access to the relevant management information systems.
- 3.5 This change further ensures that any person who may become COVID19 symptomatic on Christmas Day will not have been in contact with anyone in a school setting in the preceding 48hrs and therefore will reduce the need to undertake tracing and notification of any schools' staff.
- 3.6 The views of Head Teachers, Trade Unions and representatives of Parent Councils have been sought on this change with most being supportive of it.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

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