

**REPORT TO:** East Lothian Council

**MEETING DATE:** 24 August 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education & Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Revision to School Session Dates 2021/22

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To seek approval to make a change to the dates for the current school session 2021/22 to align the dates for the festive period closure and end of school session with our neighbouring authority, namely City of Edinburgh Council. The revision of dates also helps address any potential issues that may arise in relation to possible positive COVID-19 cases prior to the festive period and the requirement to carry out contact tracing amongst pupils and staff once schools have closed.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
- (i) approve the change to the school session dates for this session, 2021/22 with the last day of term before the festive break being brought forward to Friday 17 December 2021 (from Thursday 23 December 2021) and for the start of the new term to be brought forward to Wednesday 5 January 2022 (from Monday 10 January 2022). Also that schools will close for the summer break a day later on Friday 1 July 2022. This aligns East Lothian dates with those of our neighbouring authority, City of Edinburgh Council (attached as Appendix 1).
  - (ii) approve delegated authority to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Council Leader and Convener of the Education Committee, for any further required changes to be made to the session dates, e.g. in relation to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The school session dates for 2021/22 were approved by Education Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2019.
- 3.2 With the current COVID-19 pandemic having had a significant impact on the daily operation of schools and the effects on our pupils and staff over the last two school sessions, and the possibility of this continuing to be the case over the coming months, the end date for schools finishing for the festive break this year is very late, currently being Thursday 23 December 2021.
- 3.3 Should we be notified of a positive COVID-19 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 48 hrs prior to the onset of symptoms. With this in mind, and with schools currently operating until Thursday 23 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.
- 3.4 A change to the term date to enable schools to close on Friday 17 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 COVID-19 symptomatic on Christmas Day will not have been in contact with anyone in a school setting in the preceding 48 hrs and therefore will reduce the need to undertake tracing and notification of any schools' staff.
- 3.6 In aligning this change and in order to adhere to the requirement of 190 school days for pupils and 195 days for teaching staff, it is necessary to move the end of the school session back by one day to Friday 1 July 2022.
- 3.7 We try wherever possible to align the East Lothian main holiday dates to those of the City of Edinburgh Council which we have done over many years in response to parental requests. Following a change to the City of Edinburgh's Christmas closure and end of session dates, which were only approved in May 2021, this was a driver for revising our session dates to allow us to align with theirs.
- 3.8 The views of parents/carers, head teachers, schools' staff and trade unions have been sought on this change. A small number of responses were received which have been taken into consideration in finalising the dates.

#### **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 Revised school session dates for 2021/22

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<b>DATE</b>	16 August 2021

**EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL  
RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES  
SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2021-2022** – Draft dates as at 16 August 2021

<b>TERM 1</b>	Staff In-service Day 1	Monday	16	August	2021
	Staff In-service Day 2	Tuesday	17	August	2021
	Pupils Resume	Wednesday	18	August	2021
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Friday	17	September	2021
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Monday	20	September	2021
	All Return	Tuesday	21	September	2021
	All Break	Friday	15	October	2021
	Staff In-service Day 3	Monday	25	October	2021
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	26	October	2021
	Term Ends	Friday	17	December	2021
	<i>Term 1 = 80 pupil days Term 1 = 83 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 2</b>	All Resume	Wednesday	5	January	2022
	All Break	Friday	11	February	2022
	Staff In-service Day 4	Monday	21	February	2022
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	22	February	2022
	All Break	Friday	8	April	2022
	Good Friday - 15 April 2022 Easter Monday – 18 April 2022  <i>Term 2 = 62 pupil days Term 2 = 63 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 3</b>	All Resume (Staff and Pupils)	Monday	25	April	2022
	May Day (Schools closed)	Monday	2	May	2022
	All Resume	Tuesday	3	May	2022
	Staff In-Service Day 5 (pupil holiday)	Monday	23	May	2022
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	24	May	2022
	Term Ends  <i>Terms 3 = 48 pupil days Terms 3 = 49 staff days</i>	Friday	1	July	2022