
School term and holiday dates 2027 to 2032

Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor – Children
and Young People

Date of decision: 2 September 2026

Lead director/officer: Sophie Maltby

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Michael Wilsher, Head of Education Sufficiency and Admissions
- Author contact details: 0116 454 5361 michael.wilsher@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

The Local Authority has a legal responsibility to determine the school term and holiday dates for community and maintained schools. All other schools, including Voluntary Aided, Academies and Free Schools are responsible for setting their own holiday patterns. In April 2026, CMB approved the publication of a public consultation exercise seeking views on a range of models covering the academic years 2027/28 to 2032/33.

The consultation sought views on two proposed models for term dates and school holidays (see Appendix 1 for a calendar view of the proposed dates):

- Model 1 – Earlier autumn start; with two-week Autumn half-term; and 2nd Week in July finish.
- Model 2 – Later autumn term start; with one-week Autumn half-term; and 2nd Week in July finish.

A total of **6,271 responses** were received to the consultation exercise undertaken between 5 May 2026 and 17 June 2026.

Respondents were predominantly:

- **Parents (52.8%)**
- **School staff (38.0%)**

Responses to the preferred term date models were **almost evenly split**:

- **Model 1:** 3,163 responses (50.44%)
- **Model 2:** 3,108 responses (49.56%)

This indicates that **there is no clear overall consensus across all respondents**.

In addition, respondents were asked about the importance of aligning Leicester City term dates with Leicestershire.

A majority of respondents indicated that this was important:

- **Very important:** 45.9%
- **Fairly important:** 17.3%
- **Total:** 63.1%

Leicestershire County Council also undertook a separate term time consultation between 05/05/2026 and 15/06/2026. While the majority of holiday periods align with Leicester City's proposed models (including Christmas, Easter and half-term breaks), there were differences in the proposed start and end dates of the academic year. In addition, the County Council's proposed models do not reflect any suggested INSET days.

This report presents the outcome of the consultation, together with the suggested options and associated risks.

2. Recommended actions/decision

It is recommended that the Lead Member:

- Notes the outcome of the consultation, which demonstrates **no clear overall consensus** between the proposed options
- Notes that a **majority of respondents (63%) consider alignment with Leicestershire to be important** and the outcome of Leicestershire County Council consultation
- Considers the relative balance between:
 - Consultation feedback
 - Stakeholder priorities (including parents and school staff)
 - The potential benefits of alignment with neighbouring authorities
 - The associated risks set out in this report
- **Approves Option 2** as the agreed model for determining school holiday and term dates for 2027/28 to 2031/32.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 Stakeholder engagement

The consultation was open to all stakeholders, with responses invited from members of the public, schools, and other interested parties.

Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council previously worked together on school term and holiday dates to align their processes and consult simultaneously on the same models for term dates and school holidays. However, Leicestershire County Council subsequently consulted on alternative models to those proposed by the City Council.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 Background

In accordance with Section 32 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Local Authority retains the legal responsibility to determine the school term and holiday dates for community and maintained schools.

All other schools, including Voluntary Aided, Academies and Free Schools are responsible for setting their own holiday patterns.

In April 2026, CMB approved the publication of a public consultation exercise seeking views on a range of models covering the academic years 2027/28 to 2032/33.

4.2 Proposed Models

The models were:

Model 1 – Earlier autumn start; with two-week Autumn half-term; and 2nd Week in July finish.

This model proposed an earlier start to the autumn term, with pupils returning before the August bank holiday. The additional teaching time at the start of the academic year enabled a two-week autumn half-term break, with the summer holiday commencing in the second week of July, consistent with the traditional pattern.

Under this model, the summer holiday would be slightly reduced to approximately five and a half weeks, in order to accommodate the extended autumn half-term and to help break up the longer autumn term (over 70 days). It was noted that a number of other local authorities and academy trusts have introduced a two-week autumn half-term, with aims including supporting curriculum planning, reducing learning loss following the summer break, and improving the balance of the autumn term.

Model 2 – Later autumn term start; with one-week Autumn half-term; and 2nd Week in July finish.

This model proposed a later start to the autumn term, maintaining a one-week autumn half-term and an academic year end in the second week of July.

Under this model, pupils would return after the August bank holiday, rather than before it as in Model 1. It was broadly aligned with arrangements historically used across the area, although some other authorities end the academic year later in July (typically one to three weeks later).

The two proposed models have been designed to provide for 190 school days within the academic year, with two suggested INSET days in addition to the 190 days. Schools are required to allocate five INSET days for staff training, during which pupils are not expected to attend. However, schools are responsible for determining their remaining INSET days and for communicating these to parents in due course.

4.3 Consultation Results

The consultation on school term dates for 2027/28 to 2031/32 ran from 05/05/2026 to 17/06/2026 and received a total of 6,271 responses (a copy is available to Executive Members, if requested).

4.3.1 Respondent profile

The majority of responses were submitted by parents (52.80%) and school staff (37.97%), with smaller proportions from members of the public (5.01%), council employees (2.03%), school governors (0.56%) and other respondents (1.64%).

Respondent	Total	Percent
Member of the public	314	5.01%
Parent	3311	52.80%
School staff member	2381	37.97%
School governor	35	0.56%
Council employee	127	2.03%
Other	103	1.64%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4.3.2 Preferred term date model

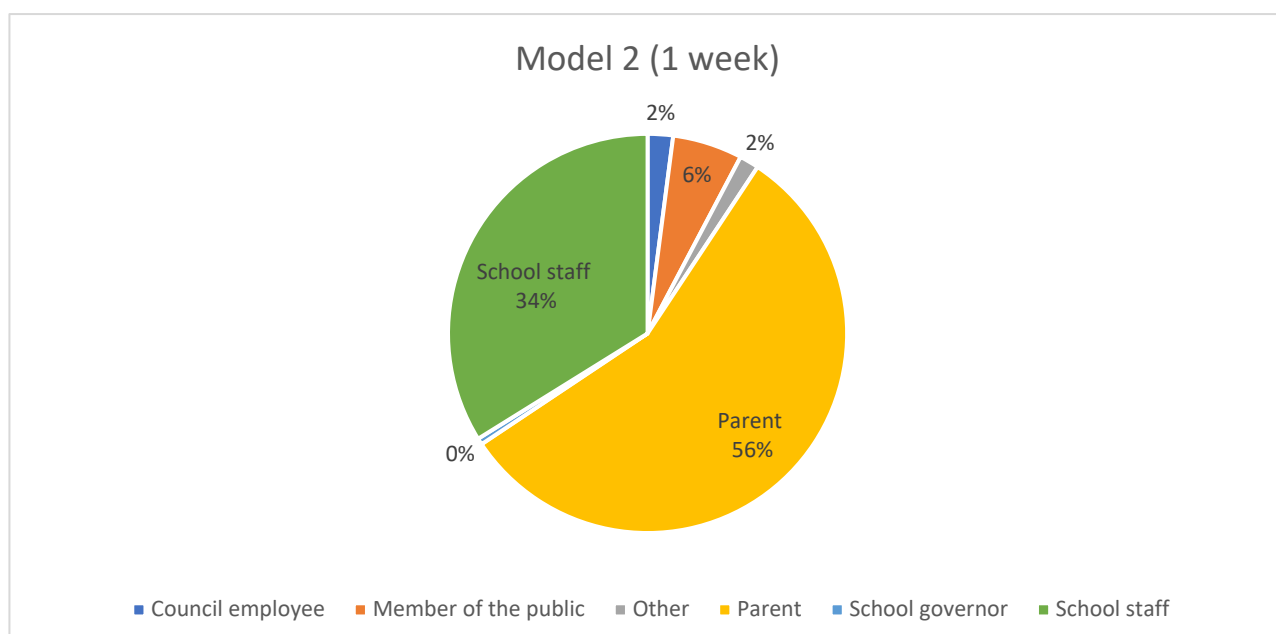
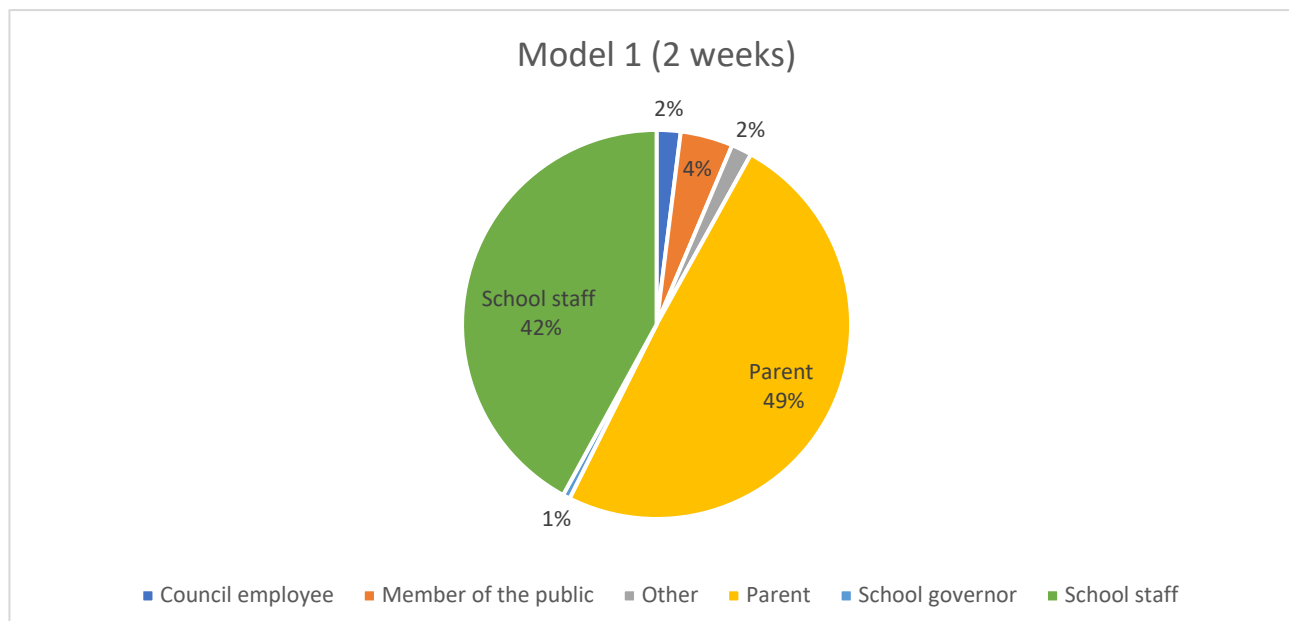
Responses were closely split between the two proposed models, with a marginal difference of 0.88 percentage points.

Preferred Term Date Model	Total	Percent
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Model 1	3163	50.44%
Model 2	3108	49.56%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4.3.3 Consultation responses by respondent type and model preference

Responses were predominantly received from parents (3,311) and school staff members (2,381), together accounting for the vast majority of overall engagement. Among parents, 49% supported Model 1 and 56% supported Model 2. Among school staff, 42% supported Model 1 and 34% supported Model 2.



4.3.4 Importance of alignment with Leicestershire County Council

A majority of respondents indicated that alignment of term dates between Leicester and Leicestershire is important with overall 63.1% responding that it was fairly or really important.

Alignment with Leicestershire County Council	Total	Percent
Very important	2878	45.89%
Fairly important	1082	17.25%
Not very important	939	14.97%
Not at all important	982	15.66%
Don't know	390	6.22%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4.3.5 Summary of consultation feedback

Overall, the consultation demonstrated strong engagement, with a high number of responses but with no clear overall consensus between the proposed models, with broadly even level of support.

4.4 Leicestershire County Council decision

Leicestershire County Council is currently considering the consultation feedback received. A report is scheduled to be presented to its Cabinet in September 2026 for a decision on the preferred approach, which may include selecting one of the consulted models or making amendments based on feedback from the consultation.

Experience has shown that differences in term dates between the City Council and the County Council can be a contentious issue for residents, particularly for households where members live in one authority area but work in the other, including school staff. Both authorities have therefore historically sought to coordinate their approaches and develop aligned models. The City and County have continued to work together, share feedback and planned approaches to try and align where possible.

4.5 Options Considered

Having regard to the consultation feedback, three potential approaches are identified for consideration, with some minor changes to the model to reflect consultation feedback and seeking to allow opportunities to align with the County, where possible:

Option 1 – Adopt Model 1 (two-week Autumn half-term)

Approve Model 1, reflecting the overall outcome of the City Council's consultation, in which slightly more respondents (50.44%) supported an earlier autumn start with a two-week October half-term. This option also reflects the preference expressed by school staff (56% responded with a preference for Model 1), who made up a significant proportion of respondents.

Risks and considerations

- Model 1 was supported by slightly more respondents overall, with 55 more respondents (0.88 percentage points separating the two models).
- Parents, who represented the largest respondent group, expressed a preference for Model 2.
- The adopted model may not align with Leicestershire County Council's final arrangements, potentially creating difficulties for families and school staff who live or work across authority boundaries.

Option 2 – Adopt Model 2 (one-week Autumn half-term)

Approve Model 2, recognising that it was supported by 49.56% of all respondents and this was the preferred model among parent respondents (53% of parents preferred Model 2), who represented the largest stakeholder group in the consultation.

This model has been updated to reflect feedback. The start of term has been moved forward to start after the bank holiday in August, which is similar to the County's 1 week option. This in turn means that the end of term has been moved forward, which allows for greater flexibility for schools to set their INSET days. The Autumn half term holiday has been moved forward from the 4th week in October to the 3rd week in October. The remaining holiday patterns are unchanged from the consultation.

Risks and considerations

- Model 2 received less overall support than Model 1, with 55 less responses in the City Council's consultation.
- School staff, who represented the second largest respondent group, expressed a preference for Model 1.
- Leicestershire County Council has not yet reached a final decision and may amend the models consulted upon before determining its preferred approach. As a result, adopting Model 2 at this stage does not guarantee greater alignment.

Option 3 – Defer a decision

Deferring a final decision later or until Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet has considered the outcome of its consultation in September 2026. This would provide an opportunity to review the County's final arrangements and consider whether greater alignment between the two authorities can be achieved.

Risks and considerations

- Deferring the decision would delay confirmation of the City's term dates.
- There is no certainty that the County Council's final decision will reflect either of the models consulted upon, as amendments may be made before a decision is reached.
- Delaying the decision does not guarantee that the two authorities will ultimately agree aligned term dates.

4.6 Recommendation

Consultation responses show no clear overall consensus between the two models, with responses split almost evenly, with a similar picture in the County. However, alignment with Leicestershire term dates is identified as an important issue for a majority of respondents.

Given the evenly split consultation outcome, there is a risk that any preferred model will not fully reflect the views of a significant proportion of stakeholders. The decision is a judgement between competing priorities considering the differences in opinion from majority stakeholders (parents and school staff), and a strong desire for alignment with county term dates.

The recommendation is to agree option 2, with Model 2, with a 1 week Autumn Term holiday. This is because there is no clear consensus about either Model, but Model 2 has more support with parents with 53% preferring Model 2 (and 44% of school staff supporting model 2). Adjustments have been made to increase the opportunity to align more with the county, which was a clear overall preference of responses. This includes

bringing forward the start the Autumn term for pupils to after the August Bank Holiday, which would further align with the county pattern. But that this decision is taken with the understanding that the county may still determine term dates different to the city.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

This report is seeking approval to implement Model 2 which proposes a later start to the autumn term, maintaining a one-week autumn half-term and an academic year end in the second week of July. This will not have any material impact over the course of a full academic year however some payments may be affected where it is made on a termly basis. This change spans across two financial years so school financial forecasting and the council accounts will reflect the changed dates in the appropriate year.

Model 2 has been consulted but following approval further communications should be sent to schools making them aware of this decision so that they can align their school budgets to the new term dates.

Mohammed Irfan, Head of Finance

Dated: 03 July 2026

5.2 Legal implications

As set out in the body of the report, pursuant to Section 32 of the Education Act 2002, in the case of a community, voluntary controlled, community special or a maintained nursery school, the local authority has the responsibility for determining the dates when school terms and holidays are to begin and end.

In the case of a foundation, voluntary aided or foundation special school, the governing body shall determine the dates and times when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end.

The report sets out the consultation exercise that has been completed. Having chosen to consult on the proposals, the Council must consider the consultation responses before making its final decision.

The consultation results do not demonstrate a clear consensus in favour of either option and therefore the decision-maker is entitled to determine the preferred model, provided clear reasons are given for the decision reached and the matters set out in this report are properly considered.

In exercising its functions, the Council must act reasonably, take into account all relevant considerations, and comply with the principles of public law. A party may seek to challenge a decision by way of an application for judicial review, where there is scope to challenge the reasonableness and fairness of, or the process followed in reaching, a decision in accordance with the judicial review principles.

Julia Slipper, Principal Solicitor (Education & Employment)

Dated: 6 July 2026

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Setting school term dates directly impacts families, staff, and communities across diverse protected characteristics. The Council undertook a public consultation on proposed school term and holiday dates for 2027 to 2032 between 5 May 2026 and 17 June 2026, and the feedback received has informed the preferred way forward. The consultation identified no clear overall consensus between the two models, but highlighted the importance of alignment with Leicestershire County Council for a majority of respondents.

The preferred option has been selected having regard to consultation responses, stakeholder views and the importance placed on alignment with Leicestershire.

To ensure that equality considerations are embedded in the final decision-making process, it would be conducive to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. This assessment should analyse the feedback from the specific groups outlined above, ensuring the final recommended model is inclusive, evidenced, and compliant with our statutory duties.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 3 July 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications associated with this report.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 8 July 2026

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Term Dates and School Holidays – Recommended model

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Yes, as the impact would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City.