

Calendar/Term Dates model proposal

Frequently asked questions

Below are the main questions arising from our recent survey on a revised school year calendar to be implemented from September.

Question	Response	Other notes
The additional 2 INSET Days in Year 1 will take teachers over their agreed 195 day working cycle	In the first year of the model these two days have been removed from August and the INSET model adapted to ensure this is no longer the case. Future models will also reflect an overall commitment to a maximum days below 195 teacher days in total. For example the draft model for 2025-26 totals 193 days.	
Fitting in additional twilight sessions will mean longer working days	The principle of the model is <u>both</u> to support staff welfare and to enhance staff development. In order to offer an additional 5 days' holiday half term, some additional INSET time to develop colleagues must be offset against this, whether full days or 'disaggregated time'. We also bear in mind that each INSET day replaces a pupil day and take care not to take away too much teaching time in balancing the model. In response to returns there will be in principle 4 full (not 3) INSET days with only a third day (not 4) disaggregated as twilights.	
Fitting in additional twilight sessions will potentially bring with it childcare issues	There will be sufficient notice of twilight sessions to hopefully be able to organise any childcare. If there is a particular difficulty then as always please speak to your Headteacher. Of the disaggregated twilights at least 2 will be scheduled each year to coincide across academies.	
Fitting in additional twilight sessions will mean a tighter calendar	We have examined how we may better balance full INSET days and disaggregated days to mitigate this and related issues. The 7 days' INSET model will be balanced as 4 full and 3 disaggregated days. This	

	can best be used to support a variety of professional development opportunities and networking and collaboration across the trust. As far as is possible schools will have flexibility to deliver what works both for all schools and for their individual priorities.	
We already struggle to fit all of the teaching content into the academic year/number of periods/ days allocated to our subject	The proposed model is in operation across a number of organisations in other areas with no detriment to pupil outcomes. Through high quality professional development we aim to enhance the quality of practice in all areas and enable pupil progress to continue strongly.	There will be due consideration of the mechanics of our school calendars whilst incorporating an additional week of non-contact against the balance of workload reduction and employee welfare considerations.
Can we have the two additional INSET days at a different point of the year rather than the last 2 days of August, for example at the end of a half term.	The two INSET days at the start of the calendar are to enable suitable preparation and information sharing prior to the return of pupils and this time remains very necessary. Placing the two core initial INSET days immediately before the start of term means that the number of pupil days in the calendar can be maximized, whereas placing INSETs in term time means a pupil day less in every instance.	Moving forwards we will examine for future years how we can have least impact on the final two days of August whilst delivering the same objectives
Is it not possible to add a week in July so that there can be a 1-week October half term	Removing a complete week of the summer holiday could cause more severe disruption to holiday plans and childcare arrangements than the proposed model itself. Reducing the summer break by a week is an unpopular option with colleagues.	
I know this current model does not mean that we break up for the summer break later but would be highly concerned if this was under consideration.	The model does not mean that we break up later for the summer and this is not under consideration. Summer breaks remain as at present at between 5 and 6 weeks, beginning in the third week in July.	
The current number of twilights already causes childcare difficulties for staff with young children. Additional twilights would only exacerbate this problem.	In response to concerns raised only 3 days will be disaggregated, with 4 as full INSET days	

<p>There may be difficulties with childcare at the end of August and the affordability of the extra childcare cost for those 2 days.</p>	<p>The proposal will not in the first year, mean an earlier return for INSET, giving time to plan for that eventuality moving forward. Further more we will consider how we may mitigate or remove the impact of this possibility in future years</p>	
<p>The model may mean returning to work when my children are still on holiday, reducing my time with my family</p>	<p>This may be an unfortunate and unintended result of enabling additional holiday time for colleagues. As above this issue will be examined going forward. Against this it may generate an opportunity to drop off and collect younger children from school which would not ordinarily be available (eg. In October half term week 2)</p>	
<p>One concern is the management of SSAs/PPE marking within this time frame as for some subjects it would be a week less to complete the marking in time for the data drop deadline.</p>	<p>Assessment and data collection windows will be reviewed to ensure they match the model.</p>	
<p>Exam classes - GCSE resits happen during the first week in November. Have the holidays and term dates been checked against the GCSE exams in Autumn?</p>	<p>The proposal will be checked against any external examination dates each year</p>	
<p>How will this impact the salary of employees who are pro-rate, paid for term time only?</p>	<p>There will be no impact on the salary of employees who work 190 days or any other working pattern. Support staff will be expected to work the number of days in their existing contract, which may mean being at work on a day when no pupils are present. There will be no reduction in pay. Line Managers will speak to their teams so that colleagues are aware of arrangements for when they should be in work</p>	
<p>How will the changes affect all year round staff and those on <i>TTO/TTO+ INSET/TTO+ weeks</i> contracts? What will be the expectations in this regard? Need to be clarified what arrangements are</p>	<p>AYR colleagues won't be affected by this as they are in schools unless they are on annual leave.</p>	

possible so that arrangements are fair to everyone		
How long will twilight sessions be	<p>This will be agreed with headteachers, referring to the present models in place.</p> <p>The distribution of these (including the day of the week) will be agreed in line with the development of the wider school/trust calendar.</p> <p>Our aim will be to coordinate at least 2 of these disaggregated days to enable collaborative development activity.</p>	
<p>INSET days/Twilight for support staff</p> <p>Not all staff are invited to INSET days and Twilights.</p>	<p>We will review should be attending INSET and Twilights with the Headteachers as soon as possible as this will depend on what is being delivered at each session and if this is relevant to all colleagues.</p>	