
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

2 June 2026

Cabinet (Education)

Title: School Holiday Calendar – Academic Session 2027-28

Purpose: To inform Cabinet of changes to the school holiday calendar from academic session 2027-28.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- a) notes the significant level of engagement and consultation with key stakeholders; and
- b) notes the resultant agreed changes to the school holiday calendar, to be implemented from session 2027-28 onwards.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The school holiday calendar sets out the days pupils are required to attend school and the working year for teachers and other term-time staff, including the allocation of in-service days, annual leave days and school closure days.
- 1.2 The Education Service currently operates with two school holiday calendars. One for schools on the mainland and Cumbrae, and another for schools on Arran.
- 1.3 Consultation has taken place with key stakeholder groups to seek views on whether there should be one school holiday calendar for all North Ayrshire Council schools.
- 1.4 There was strong support across all stakeholder groups to move to one holiday calendar for all schools from academic session 2027-28.
- 1.5 There was strong support across all stakeholder groups that the school calendar from academic session 2027-28 should allocate a 2-week break in October and reduce the summer break by one week to facilitate this.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended, set the length of the school year at 190 days for pupils. The distribution of those days across the calendar year is a matter for individual education authorities. Furthermore, the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) sets the length of the school year for teachers at 195 days and notes that annual leave for teachers is a matter to be determined at a local council level, following consultation with teacher trade unions.

- 2.2 Consultation takes place annually within the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT), with the proposed school holiday calendar then shared with the second tier Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) as part of the wider consultation process. The proposed school holiday calendar is subsequently also shared with schools who are asked to feedback the views of their parent councils.
- 2.3 School holiday calendars for mainland and Cumbrae schools have followed a similar pattern for a number of years, with key school closure periods allocated to October (1 week), Christmas (2 weeks), Easter (2 weeks) and Summer (7 weeks), with a number of long weekends allocated within school terms.
- 2.4 School holiday calendars for Arran schools have historically followed a slightly different pattern from the rest of the authority, with key school closure periods allocated to October (2 weeks), Christmas (2 weeks), Easter (2 weeks) and Summer (7 weeks).
- 2.5 The Education Service was keen to seek stakeholder views on moving to one holiday calendar for all schools. An online survey was issued to stakeholder groups on 23 February 2026 and closed on 6 March 2026. Stakeholder groups included: Parents/Carers; Teaching Staff; Early Years Staff; Support Staff; Facilities Management Staff and Pupils.
- 2.6 A total of 6813 survey responses were received, details of respondents as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Responses
Parent or Carer	4578
Teaching Staff	1073
Early Years Staff	227
Support Staff	492
Facilities Management Staff	178
Pupils	133
Other	132

- 2.7 Of the responses received, 62% said it would be a good idea to have one set of school holidays for all schools, 31% said this may be a good idea and 7% said this would not be a good idea.
- 2.8 Of the responses received, 73% said that it would be a good idea to align school holiday calendars by moving to a 2-week holiday period in October for all schools. 9% said that this may be a good idea and 18% said this would not be a good idea.
- 2.9 Of the response received, 49% said a move to a 2 week holiday period in October for all schools should be achieved by schools coming back one week earlier in the 2026/2027 school holiday year, 16% said the school holidays should start one week later, 20% said they didn't mind if schools came back from holidays one week earlier or started one week later, and 15% didn't agree with either option as they didn't agree with making any changes to school holiday calendars.

2.10 There are a number of potential benefits of the proposed holiday calendar. For example:

- **Simpler planning and coordination across the education service.** A single holiday calendar would support the planning of key activities across the school year and ensure all school term dates, holidays, closure days and in-service days are aligned across all North Ayrshire schools and term-time early years settings.
- **Better distribution of holiday periods throughout the year.** Adding a week to the October holiday could have benefits for mental health and wellbeing, giving all pupils a two-week break between each term. Reducing the extended summer holiday period by one week may also have benefits, as comments are often made by some stakeholders that the current 7-week holiday is too long.
- **Potential cost savings for some families.** Introducing a 2-week break in October may help families to access lower holiday prices outside the summer period.

2.11 The LNCT meeting of 11 March 2026 considered responses to the school holiday engagement survey and agreed that the education service should move to one school holiday calendar for 2027-28 for all schools, which includes a 2-week holiday period in October, facilitated by an earlier return from the summer break in August 2027. This was also endorsed by JCC at their meeting of 12 March 2026. Further consultation with schools/parent schools has also been supportive of this proposal.

2.12 The school holiday calendar for 2027-28 will be published on the Council's website during June 2026, and existing published calendars for 2026-27 will also be amended at this time

2.13 It should be noted that the neighbouring Ayrshire Councils have also expressed an interest in exploring the option of changing the duration of the October and summer holiday periods. Should any changes to school holiday calendars subsequently be approved in neighbouring Council areas, the Education Service will endeavour to align key school holiday dates with neighbouring Ayrshire Council areas where possible, recognising that some parents/carers with children in North Ayrshire schools work within neighbouring councils.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) notes the significant level of engagement and consultation with key stakeholders; and
- b) notes the resultant agreed changes to the school holiday calendar, to be implemented from session 2027-28 onwards.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The introduction of a 2-week holiday period in October may enable some families to take advantage of lower holiday prices outwith the summer period.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 A single holiday calendar across the education authority will facilitate more efficient simultaneous collaborative working to deliver on the wellbeing priority of the Council Plan.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)

4.8 The school holiday calendar survey included engagement with stakeholder groups on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae.

United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

4.9 None.

Consumer Duty

4.10 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 The following groups were consulted on proposed changes to the school holiday through an online survey:

- Parents/carers
- Teaching staff
- Early Years staff
- Support staff
- Facilities management staff
- Pupils

5.2 Consultation on the proposed school holiday calendar for academic session 2027/2028 has taken place with:

- LNCT
- JCC
- Schools / Parent Councils

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For further information please contact **Andrew McClelland, Head of Service (Education)**, on 01294 324413.

Background Papers

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School holidays and in-service dates 2027/28 (Arran & Mainland Schools)

Pupils on holiday	Yellow
Staff only in-service days	Cyan
Children in School	Purple

August 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			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 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					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 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	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 2027

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		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				

March 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				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 2028

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						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					

Secondary Schools - Pupil attendance will be 190 after deducting 5 in-service days
Primary Schools - Pupil attendance will be 190 after deducting 5 in-service days.

School holidays and in-service dates 2027/28 (all schools) (text alternative)

August 2027

- Monday 2nd August to Wednesday 25th August: pupils on holiday
- Thursday 26th August and Friday 27th August: staff only in-service day
- Monday 30th August to Tuesday 31st August: children in school

September 2027

- Wednesday 1st September to Thursday 30th September: children in school

October 2027

- Friday 1st October: children in school
- Monday 4th October to Friday 15th October: pupils on holiday
- Monday 18th October to Friday 29th October: children in school

November 2027

- Monday 1st November to Thursday 18th November: children in school
- Friday 19th November to Monday 22nd November: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 23rd November: staff only in-service day
- Wednesday 24th November to Tuesday 30th November: children in school

December 2027

- Wednesday 1st December to Wednesday 22nd December: children in school
- Thursday 23rd December to Friday 31st December: pupils on holiday

January 2028

- Monday 3rd January to Wednesday 5th January: pupils on holiday
- Thursday 6th January to Monday 31st January: children in school

February 2028

- Tuesday 1st February to Wednesday 16th February: children in school
- Thursday 17th February: staff only in-service day
- Friday 18th February to Monday 21st February: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 22nd February to Tuesday 29th February: children in school

March 2028

- Wednesday 1st March to Friday 31st March: children in school

April 2028

- Monday 3rd April to Monday 17th April: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 18th April to Friday 28th April: children in school

May 2028

- Monday 1st May: pupils on holiday
- Tuesday 2nd May to Friday 26th May: children in school
- Monday 29th May to Tuesday 30th May: pupils on holiday
- Wednesday 31st May: children in school

June 2028

- Thursday 1st June to Friday 30th June: children in school

July 2028

- Monday 3rd July to Monday 31st July: pupils on holiday