

## Consultation on school term dates regulations

### Consultation response form

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Responses should be returned by **21 February 2014** to:

School Governance Branch  
Schools Management and Effectiveness Division  
Department for Education and Skills  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

email: [SMED2@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SMED2@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

**Question 1** – Do you agree with our proposals for the consultation process which is to be carried out where school term dates are not harmonised by local authorities and governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools? (Please see paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4 of section 4.)

<b>Agree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Comments**

<p>In the interests of reducing the difficulties faced by families, as a result of variations in school term dates, it would seem sensible to try to achieve harmonisation through consultation.</p>
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**Question 2** – Do you agree with our proposals for the various consultation processes which are to be carried out where term dates have been harmonised, but the Welsh Ministers believe that the dates for some or all schools should be altered? (Please see paragraphs 4.5 to 4.18 of section 4.)

<b>Agree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disagree</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Comments**

<p>If dates have already been agreed, it would seem questionable for there to be ministerial intervention. The term 'justifiable' is open to interpretation and the ability for ministers to control the timing of school holidays, at possibly short notice, runs contrary to the proposal to stabilize the difficulties faced by families under the current arrangements.</p> <p>Although Further Education Institutions will not be subject to the legislation, in the event that FEI's had planned their own term dates around the harmonised school terms dates, ministerial alterations could create problems for staff in FEI's in terms of cancelled sessions for school link pupils, and in turn, for the pupils who would not be able to attend college, when the FEI then closed for their own pre planned breaks. This could lead to parts of the curriculum remaining uncovered due to time constraints. If FEI's did decide to remain in line with school term date alterations made by ministers, consideration also needs to be made of the impact that this will have on the teaching of HE in FE, in terms of possible conflicting term dates between HE and FE institutions.</p> <p>Alterations to already agreed term dates, particularly those made at short notice due to, for example, an outbreak of Measles, have the potential to increase difficulties for parent/carers and staff, when it comes to planning holidays and when making arrangements for childcare. This also has the potential to create difficulties for employers if there are mass absences of parents and carers at short notice, and to increase the workload for those who do remain in work. It also has the potential to create the scenario that school holiday time effectively becomes 'sick leave', which does not seem appropriate.</p>
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### Question 3 – Equality impact assessment

We would welcome your views on the potential impact of all of our proposals on:

- a) disability
- b) race
- c) gender and gender reassignment
- d) age
- e) religion and belief and non-belief
- f) sexual orientation
- g) human rights.

Please enter your views here:

No Comments

**Question 4** – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Further Education Institutions need to be considered in these arrangements and included in the consultation process. Although FEI's are free to determine their own term dates, many choose to align them with that of the local schools.

The role of FEI's in the 14 - 19 agenda needs to be acknowledged. Pupils engaged in courses provided by FEI's need the stability of harmonious term dates as do the teachers and lecturers. It would be counter productive for FEI's to have differing term dates. Account needs to be taken of exam and assessment schedules in FE provision and the impact that alterations to school term dates would have on FE curriculum planning, for school link courses.

Lecturing staff may also be parents, who would face considerable childcare difficulties if the college had differing term dates from the LEA, in terms of there not being the flexibility for them to take annual leave during term time. Therefore FEI's and associated staff trade unions should be offered the opportunity to take part in any consultation on the harmonisation of school term dates.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: