



# Report on the consultation for school term and holiday dates for the academic year 2027 – 2028

## Introduction

Local authorities are responsible for setting school term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools, while Foundation, Trust, Voluntary Aided Schools, and Academies determine their own calendars. In practice, the vast majority of Norfolk schools follow the same term dates.

Each academic year must include **190 days** when pupils are expected to attend school, and **195 days** when teachers are required to be present. School transport is arranged for all days when students are in attendance.

To plan the school calendar, Norfolk County Council collaborates closely with neighbouring local authorities, creating what is known as the Eastern Region Model Calendar. This joint approach has been established for several years, ensuring consistency across the region.

By working together, we aim to streamline the process of setting term dates, helping to reduce disruptions for families and transportation providers. We work closely with Suffolk County Council when setting suggested Inset days to support pupils, parents and staff living and attending settings in the neighbouring authority.

Academies have full autonomy to set their own term dates under their funding agreements as they are not bound by the Education (School Day and School Year) Regulations.

We recognise growing interest in alternative term structures, such as a two-week October half term, particularly among academies. While local authorities operate within different regulations, we are keen to understand views and consider whether this might warrant future discussion for community and voluntary controlled schools.

Changing term dates is complex, and would come with compromises, with implications both in schools and beyond. Any decision must be for the right reasons, not simply in response to wider trends and balance practicality, fairness, and community needs. Academies have term date freedoms Norfolk County Council cannot fully match, so our approach needs to reflect these differences.

At this stage, we are not consulting formally or making commitments. We value the feedback shared and will use it to inform future thinking. As members of the Eastern Regional Group, we believe any changes should be part of a wider, collaborative conversation. For now, we propose maintaining the familiar current model while remaining open to ongoing research and dialogue.

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### 1. Consultation

Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation, using a survey hosted on Citizenspace. It was published on the Council's website and sent to over 400 schools, via e-courier on 30 September 2025 and the consultation closed on 14 November 2025.

We consulted on the proposed Eastern Region Model term and holiday dates for 2027 - 2028, as set out in **Appendix A**.

The proposed model includes 190 teaching days, when schools must be open to pupils and which home to school transport will be provided. The pattern of dates included five suggested in-service training dates for the academic year.

### 2. Analysis of consultation responses

The detailed consultation analysis can be found in Appendix B including comments from respondents. Percentage rates have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

#### Respondents

32 responses were received this year.

21 respondents provided details of the schools they were associated with; 3 Secondary Schools, 10 LA maintained primary/infant/nursery schools (some of which represent federations), 5 academy primary/infant/nursery schools, 1 special school and 2 responses from multi-academy trusts.

The majority of responses were from staff (78%), with a small number from parents/guardians (19%), and a single governor (3%).

#### Proposed school term dates for 2027/2028

Of the 32 respondents who took part in the consultation, 5 respondents (16%) strongly agreed and 8 respondents (25%) agreed with the proposed school term dates.

A summary of the comments made in support (strongly agree/ agree) of this proposal were;

### **Consistency & Familiarity**

- Dates align with previous years, making planning easier for schools and families.
- Fits well with national holidays and established patterns.

### **Fairness & Practicality**

- Terms are evenly distributed and work well for exam schedules (e.g., GCSEs).

### **Attendance**

- Helps parents plan holidays, reducing term-time absences.
- Seen as “as good as it could be” given calendar constraints.

One respondent (3%) neither agreed or disagreed.

Twelve respondents (38%) disagreed and 4 respondent (13%) strongly disagreed with the proposed school term dates. The comments made by those who did not support the proposal were;

### **Staff Training Days**

- Insufficient training time in September: One day is not enough for safeguarding and preparation; many suggest two days (1st & 2nd September).
- Poor timing of July training day: Last day of term is unproductive; should be moved earlier (e.g., October).
- November INSET day considered unnecessary or better placed in September.

### **Term Structure Issues**

- October Half-Term: Strong calls for a two-week break to align with academies and improve staff/pupil wellbeing and attendance; Mismatch with neighbouring schools creates recruitment and parental challenges.
- Evidence cited (Unity Trust) for benefits of extended break.

### **Calendar Adjustments**

- Suggestions to move training days to:
  - September (start of year)
  - October (before half-term)
  - Remove April or November INSET days.
- Some want term to finish on Friday 21 July for a full week and longer summer holiday.

### **Impact on Staff & Pupils**

- Limited time for preparation at start of year affects classroom readiness and strategic planning.
- End-of-year training seen as wasted time when staff are tired.

### **Proposed staff training dates for 2027/2028**

There were 29 responses to this question

41% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed staff training dates.

6% neither agreed or disagreed.

50% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed staff training dates.

3% responded ‘don’t know’.

### **Response to the views raised**

The response rate to the consultation remains low at 32 respondents, although this has increased from the 23 received the previous year.

It is noted that several academies have responded to the term dates suggested, which may indicate that the model set by the LA is followed by academy trust colleagues.

As with previous years there have been challenging decisions regarding some dates to ensure that 190 teaching days are available, around the public holidays and evenly spread across the year. Where possible any model aims to avoid half weeks and evenly spread the INSET days throughout the year, as well as not have all the dates on a single day of the week and vary them between Mondays and Fridays.

Those in support of the proposed 2027/28 term dates highlight their consistency with previous years, which makes planning easier for schools and families. The dates align well with national holidays, provide evenly distributed terms, and fit exam schedules, particularly for secondary schools. Many agree that this structure helps parents plan holidays in advance, reducing term-time absences. Overall, the proposal is seen as practical, familiar, and as good as possible given calendar constraints.

Those against the proposal raised concerns about staff training and term structure. A common view is that one training day in September is insufficient for safeguarding and preparation, with many suggesting two days at the start of term and moving the July training day earlier. There is strong pressure for a two-week October half-term to align with academies, improve staff and pupil wellbeing, and avoid recruitment challenges. There is argument that the current plan risks inefficiency, disrupts alignment with neighbouring schools, and fails to provide adequate preparation time for staff.

We are aware it is challenging to create a model for term dates that will be universally agreed. Following a review of the collective responses, in collaboration with Suffolk County Council, we have considered how our combined responses across both authorities reflect some concerns regarding the distribution of INSET days.

Feedback indicated that adding an additional INSET day in September would provide staff with valuable time for training and preparation ahead of the new academic year. There was a strong view that scheduling an INSET day on the final day of term, as the summer holiday begins, would not be an effective use of time. Therefore, making adjustments was considered.

After a joint meeting with Suffolk County Council on 17 December 2025 and 15 January 2026, we together reviewed the responses and considered options for possible revision to the agreed dates in both authorities: specifically, to address the concerns around sufficient INSET days at the beginning of term in September 2027. Two additional options were identified and reviewed.

#### **Option A:**

- The addition of a second INSET day at the beginning of academic year on Thursday 2 September 2027 and,
- the removal of the INSET day previously scheduled for the last day of term Friday 21 July 2028

## Option B:

The last time the 1st of September occurred on a Wednesday was in 2021. In this year, the first three days 1, 2 and 3 of September were all suggested INSET days, meaning that pupils then began on Monday 6 September.

- 1,2,3 September become INSET recommended days with school starting 6 September.
- Removal of INSET days on scheduled for Monday 1 November and the last day of term Friday 21 July 2028

## Option C:

- Proceed with the dates as consulted with no further adjustments.

### 3. Schools Partnership and Infrastructure Group Review

Following a review by SPIG (formerly EPIG) on 21 January 2026, the three options were considered in detail. The SPIG group acknowledged and understood the concerns raised in response to the consultation regarding a single INSET day at the beginning of the academic year under Option C.

It was noted that Option A would address the issue of a single INSET day in September; however, this option presents a challenge as pupils would return to school on a Friday. There is a risk that a single-day start could result in poor attendance on the first day of term. Attendance teams at NCC advise that part-weeks do not support good attendance in schools and that such arrangements should be avoided where possible.

Option B was therefore considered more favourable, as it would allow staff sufficient time at the beginning of term to prepare for the return of pupils and ensure that pupils return on a Monday, accessing a full week at the start of term. It was acknowledged that this option would result in INSET days being clustered at the beginning of the academic year; however, schools retain flexibility through the use of twilight sessions for staff training.

### 4. Recommendation

Overall, the proposed term dates put out for consultation follow established and familiar pattern, reflecting historic models that schools and families are accustomed to. This approach provides continuity and predictability, supporting effective planning for both educational settings, the wider community and alignment with neighbouring council areas.

The proposed Eastern Regional Model calendar for 2027/2028 is recommended for approved with the following adjustments (**Appendix C**):

- 1,2,3 September become inset recommended days with school starting 6 September.
- Removal of INSET days on scheduled for Monday 1 November and the last day of term Friday 21 July 2028

This report will be presented CSLT for review and final decision.

Please note, the local authority has a responsibility to publish the school term dates 18 months before the start date of the 2027/2028 school calendar.

#### 4. Appendix A- Proposed Term Date Calendar 2027- 2028 V1



Norfolk County Council

# 2027-2028

## Norfolk Model Calendar for consultation

This calendar applies to community schools, community special schools, VC schools and nursery schools and sets the days on which school transport will be provided. While most Foundation, VA, foundation special, free schools and academy trusts who are able to set their own dates, adopt the Norfolk Model, we advise you to check with your child's school before making holiday or other commitments.

September 2027						
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October 2027						
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November 2027						
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January 2028						
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February 2028						
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March 2028						
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April 2028						
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May 2028						
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June 2028						
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July 2028						
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August 2028						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Key : White dates - schools open to pupils  
 Yellow dates - pupil holiday  
 Red dates - bank holiday

Five staff training days will be selected from yellow dates, we suggest 1 September, 1 November, 4 January 18 April and 21 July . Some may choose to use twilight hours for staff training instead of some or all of these.



## Appendix B – Responses received via Citizen Space

### School term dates for the school year 2027-28

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/term-dates2027-28>

This report was created on Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 13:40

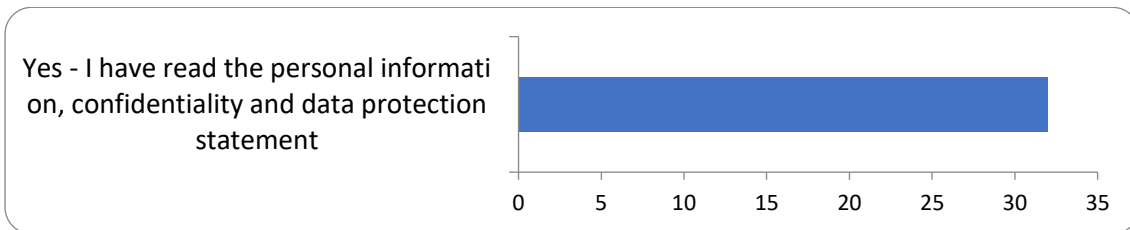
The activity ran from 29/09/2025 to 14/11/2025

Responses to this survey: **32**

**1: Please tick to confirm that you have read the Personal information, confidentiality and data protection statement above.**

#### Data protection agreement

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.

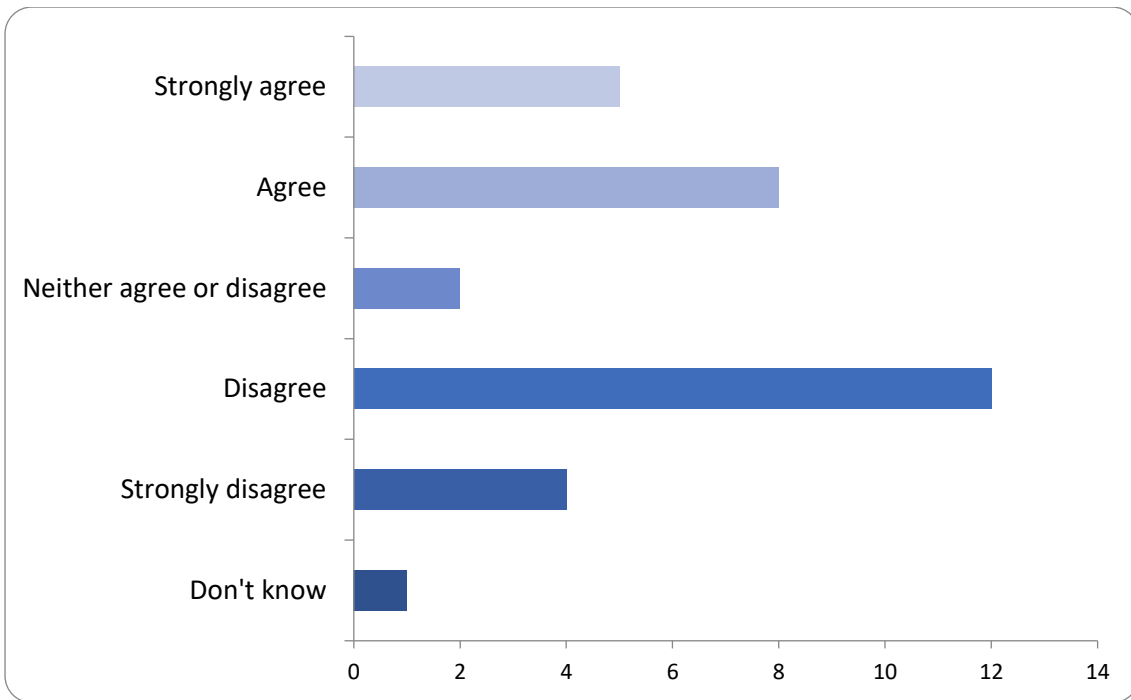


Option	Total	Percent
Yes - I have read the personal information, confidentiality and data protection statement	32	100.00%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**2: How far do you agree or disagree with the school term dates for pupils proposed for the academic year 2027/28?**

#### Term dates

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	5	15.62%
Agree	8	25.00%
Neither agree or disagree	2	6.25%
Disagree	12	37.50%
Strongly disagree	4	12.50%
Don't know	1	3.12%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**3: Why do you say this? Please write in below:**

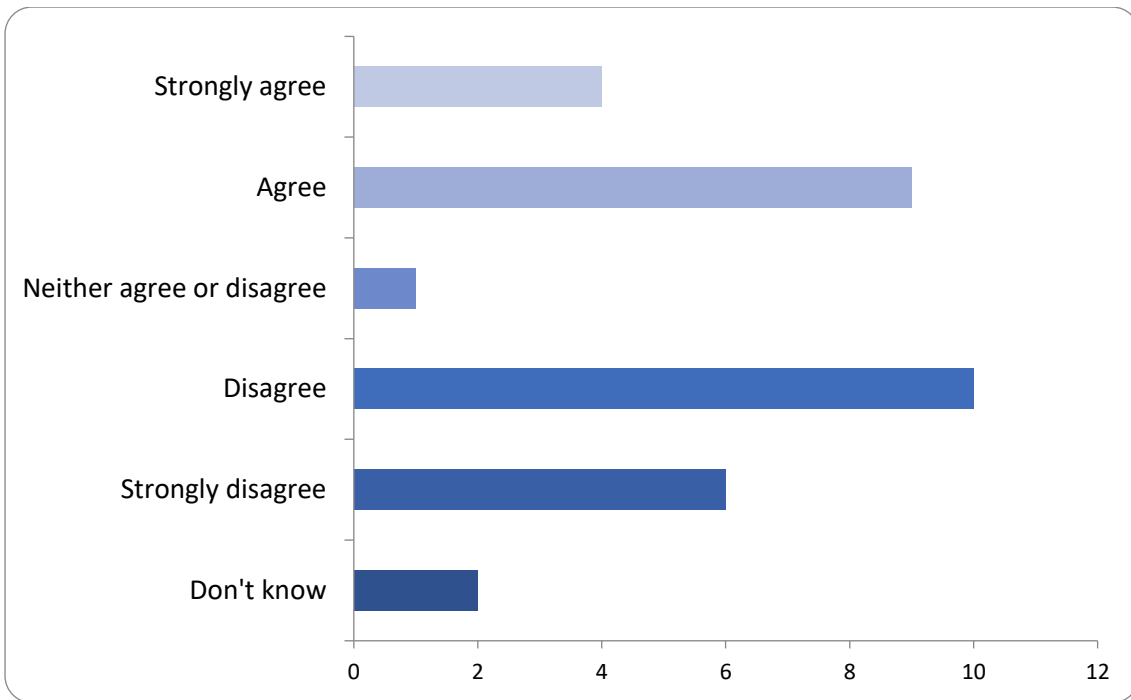
**tell us why**

There were 29 responses to this part of the question.

**4: How far do you agree or disagree with the staff training dates proposed for 2027/28?**

**staff dates**

There were 32 responses to this part of the question.

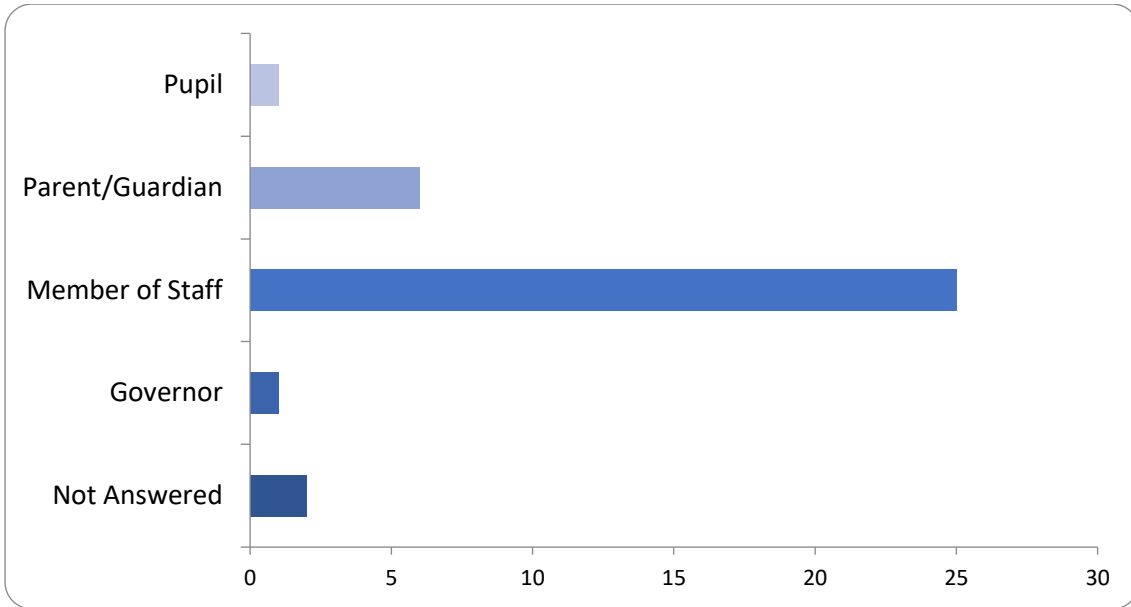


Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	4	12.50%
Agree	9	28.12%
Neither agree or disagree	1	3.12%
Disagree	10	31.25%
Strongly disagree	6	18.75%
Don't know	2	6.25%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

**5: Please tell us who you are, (tick all that apply):**

**who are you**

There were 30 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Pupil	1	3.12%
Parent/Guardian	6	18.75%
Member of the Parent Teacher Association	0	0.00%
Member of Staff	25	78.12%
Governor	1	3.12%
Local business	0	0.00%
Local sports group	0	0.00%
Local community group	0	0.00%
Not Answered	2	6.25%

**Other, please specify**

There were 3 responses to this part of the question.

**6: Please tell us the school you are linked to, if applicable.**

**Please tell us the school you are linked to, if applicable**

There were 21 responses to this part of the question.

<b>Free text comments received through the consultation</b>	
How far do you agree or disagree with the school term dates for pupils proposed for the academic year 2027/28? - Term dates	Why do you say this? Please write in below: - tell us why
Agree	I think that it would be preferable NOT to have a staff training day on 21 July as it is never productive on the last day of the academic year. This would be better being moved to another point, e.g. 22 October
Agree	
Strongly agree	Best fit for the calendar and same as previous years fitting around national holiday
Strongly agree	They seem fair and mirror previous school years. Terms seem even and as a secondary school teacher, work well for GCSEs.
Agree	
Disagree	One training day is not enough in September. We need two. It would be better for the children to come in on the 6th September, and for us to use the 2nd and 3rd as training days. The 1st could be part of the summer holiday. This could be achieved by having the children in school on April 18th and July 21st. Neither of these days have any value as training days.
Strongly agree	
Disagree	Instead of the additional day on November 1st, it would be better to extend either the Christmas break or Easter break by one day (ie. 5th January or 19th April instead). I also think that it would be more useful to have 2 training days in September (ie. 1st and 2nd September) instead of the training day on 21st July. There is a lot of preparation at the start of the academic year so two days would be beneficial. At the end of the year, everyone is tired so time won't be used as productively.
Disagree	I would prefer to have 2 PD days in September 2027 for staff training. All staff need safeguarding training on the first day back so no other all day training could take place that year.
Agree	Feel the November inset would be best served on the Friday before half term so children start back on a full week. Several schools have started having this prior week off so would potentially also be easier for childcare.
Disagree	Less children will come back part way through a week in September. They will be on holiday. Also no need for the final day in July to be a Thursday - make it a Friday.
Agree	similar to previous years
Strongly disagree	As maintained schools we need to match the academies around us, in Thetford and Wicklewood our neighbouring schools are having a 2 week autumn half term and not at the same time -creating a 3 week

	<p>window of non alignment. In addition recruiting staff is hard enough without the academies offering a 2 week break that is attractive not only to staff who may or may not have children but is also a reason for parents choosing schools. A 2 week autumn term break has been shown by Unity trust to improve staff wellbeing and attendance and student attendance. With Norfolk falling behind in attendance data nationally I fear a negative impact on attendance will be the result.</p>
Neither agree or disagree	<p>I would be keen to explore a two week autumn half term. A previous Trust I worked for had this structure, the benefits for both staff and pupil wellbeing was evident.</p> <p>Staff training - we would be unable to cover all training needed at the start of the academic year with only one training day in September.</p>
Disagree	<p>It would be preferable for the summer term to finish on Friday 21st July so we would be in school for a full week and then have 6 full weeks of the summer holiday.</p>
Agree	<p>It looks as good as it could with the way the dates fall. I would move the November training day elsewhere - maybe 3 in September, I might remove the April one for this to happen.</p>
Strongly disagree	<p>Having only one INSET at the beginning of term is not conducive to a smooth start to school. It also does not allow schools to set the direction for the term. The one day will have to be assigned to safeguarding training so no other whole staff training can take place until November. This is far from ideal.</p>
Strongly agree	<p>It helps parents/carers to plan ahead for holidays; which reduces absences during term time.</p>
Don't know	<p>Where are the term dates so we can make a judgement on this. I cannot find them.</p>
Strongly disagree	<p>To bring all the schools in line with others in Norfolk a two week October half term would be of benefit.</p>
Disagree	<p>Only one day of holiday available for INSET in September is unhelpful. I would suggest moving the somewhat inexplicable November day back to September. This would allow a nice transition for pupils to come in on the Friday, have the immediate relief of a weekend and then get on with their term.</p>
Disagree	<p>We would like the start of the school term to be Friday 3rd September, Monday 1st November to be a teaching day, and April 18th to be a teaching day. 22nd October would be a training day as would 2nd September. The other training days 1st Sep, 3th Jan and 21st July work for us</p>
Disagree	<p>We would prefer two training days at the start of the academic year - 1st and 2nd Sept</p>
Agree	<p>Dates fit well with CPD opportunities</p>
Disagree	<p>Two days are ideally needed at the start of the Autumn term for staff to be ready for the term ahead. One of these days has to be used towards Safeguarding training which leaves little time for school related things and preparing classrooms for the term.</p> <p>November 1st should be moved to September 2nd.</p>

Disagree	<p>We would prefer</p> <p>1st and 2nd September training days  22nd October training day  4th January training day  18th April school open  21st July training day</p>
Neither agree or disagree	<p>Staff training days are not sensible. I propose:</p> <p>1st and 2nd September training days  22nd October training day  4th January training day  18th April school open  21st July training day</p>
Strongly agree	Fits nicely with family holidays
Disagree	The extra day on October half term (Monday 1st November) is wasted time. Would rather have this day elsewhere e.g. 5th January or 20th July.
Strongly disagree	<p>With several schools in Norfolk now moving to two-week half terms in October—an approach that appears to be successful for both staff retention and pupil attendance—there are significant implications for other schools and parents. In particular, for families with children at different schools, if one school has a two-week half term while another has only a one-week break, it disrupts attendance at the latter.</p> <p>Effectively, schools adopting a two-week October half term have initiated a domino effect, prompting more schools to consider following suit. Therefore, the 2027/28 term dates consultation should be considering the option of a two-week October half term.</p> <p>A two-week October break could also generate transport savings for the local authority, provided that the school day is lengthened at other times, a model successfully employed elsewhere, to ensure that learning time is not lost.</p> <p>Regarding staff training days, having only one day after the summer holidays is insufficient for necessary training and preparation, particularly when onboarding new staff.</p>
Disagree	It should be 2 weeks in october for secondary schools and 2 weeks in may for primary schools
Agree	These seem to follow previous patterns of term dates so should not be surprises for parents.

#### 4. Appendix C- Proposed Term Date Calendar 2027- 2028 V2 .



# Norfolk County Council **2027-2028** Norfolk Model Calendar for consultation

This calendar applies to community schools, community special schools, VC schools and nursery schools and sets the days on which school transport will be provided. While most Foundation, VA, foundation special, free schools and academy trusts who are able to set their own dates, adopt the Norfolk Model, we advise you to check with your child's school before making holiday or other commitments.

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October 2027						
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November 2027						
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December 2027						
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January 2028						
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February 2028						
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March 2028						
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July 2028						
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Key : White dates - schools open to pupils  
 Yellow dates - pupil holiday  
 Red dates - bank holiday

Five staff training days will be selected from yellow dates, we suggest 1-3 September, 4 January and 18 April. Some may choose to use twilight hours for staff training instead of some or all of these.

