



# GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

## **Consultation Report on the proposed changes to term dates for our East Coast academies commencing September 2020 onwards**

This report summarises the findings of a public consultation about the proposal to change the term dates for our East Coast academies (Skegness Infant Academy, Skegness Junior Academy, Beacon Primary Academy, Ingoldmells Academy, Seathorne Primary Academy and the Skegness Academy). This excludes Mablethorpe Primary Academy.

DRET (David Ross Education Trust) have also consulted on the same proposed changes for their Skegness Grammar School and Hogsthorpe Primary Academy.

The consultation ran for a total of four weeks from 6 January 2020 to 31 January 2020.

### **1. The Proposal**

As a group of Academies based in a coastal area, we are fully aware of periods in term time when attendance shows a drop due to seasonal working. Working families find it difficult to take time off work as they suffer loss of earnings and by waiting until the season is over, parents can then take advantage of cheaper holidays outside of term time. As a result, we see a rise in unauthorised absence.

Having considered the needs of our local community and explored strategies for improving attendance, the Skegness Infant Academy, Skegness Junior Academy, Beacon Primary Academy, Ingoldmells Academy, Seathorne Primary Academy and the Skegness Academy (all GAT Academies) are collectively considering moving to a model of taking two weeks' holiday in the October half term, commencing in the academic year September 2020. In addition, the Skegness Grammar School and Hogsthorpe Primary Academy (DRET Academies) are considering the same route and we are working together on this proposal to ensure we best meet the needs of our community.

### **The Rationale**

The rationale for the proposal is as follows:

- To have a holiday arrangement that supports our seasonal community and parent work patterns. As a group of Academies, we receive many holiday requests during the October/November period due to the seasonal working hours and to have two weeks at this point in the year may help to increase our overall attendance and reduce the number of holiday requests in term time.
- To create full educational weeks rather than having so many four day weeks. Training days also eat into these.

- The directive from the School Attendance guidance (July 2019) states ‘Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils.’ This would be fulfilled with the equivalent of five training days taken as twilights or a combination of training days and twilights timetabled across the six terms. This would be set up in advance so staff would be aware of what was happening when.
- To allow parents to take full advantage of the cheaper holidays on offer at this time. As this is not a national proposition, prices should remain competitive.
- To break up the long stretch during the Winter period. Children will return fresher maximising learning.
- The planned LCC (Lincolnshire County Council) October half term holiday would be one of the two weeks.
- By providing parents with an option of a two week, out of season break, this could reduce the number of absences and ensure that the pupils get the full educational time.

Attached you will find a list of the proposed terms dates along with a plotted calendar to show you the view of the whole academic year for 2020/21, 2022/22 and 2022/23.

## **2. Consultees**

A letter was sent to parents/carers of pupils at each Academy, all other schools and academies within the local area and to Lincolnshire County Council informing them of the proposal. The letter also included details of how to respond to the consultation and gave an invite to attend a public consultation meeting which was held on 15 January 2020.

Letters were also sent to all staff and Trade Unions.

Information was added to each academy website and the Greenwood Academies Trust websites at the start of consultation period.

## **3. Key themes coming out of the consultation**

### Consultation Meeting

There were no attendees at the consultation meeting.

### Parents/Carers Consultation Responses

Received an email from WJEC Exams to make us aware that the November examination series is generally scheduled for the start of November each year.

Received an email from an individual confirming they agree with the reasons behind the change but has a concern that this is becoming increasingly popular with schools and holiday companies are quickly becoming aware of this and could mean that holiday prices during this time may increase.

Received an email from a parent who will have a child in a GAT academy and a DRET academy (which is not included in the consultation) and this was clarified.

### Staff Consultation Responses

Received 2 emails from staff requesting clarification on an inset day and one about contractual hours.

Other staff comments have been positive.

### Academy Advisory Council Consultation Responses

The AAC's were informed and all information added to websites – no comments to report.

### Pupil Consultation Responses

No comments have been received from pupils.

### Local Authority Responses

A letter was received from Lincolnshire County Council about the transport and details of potential additional costs if changing the term dates and this will be responded to.

A letter was also received from Stagecoach as the local bus services – they have confirmed they understand the rationale and can work with the pattern of adjusted school holidays provided that other schools in the area are prepared to adopt similar dates.

## **4. Conclusion and Next steps**

Following review of the responses to the consultation, the Greenwood Academies Trust have agreed to proceed with the changes to the term dates with the effect from 1 September 2020. We also believe that David Ross Education Trust will be proceeding with the change.

Letters will also be sent to parents/carers, staff, other local schools, Lincolnshire County Council and unions to notify them of the change.

**Wayne Norrie**  
**Chief Executive**

***Dated: 24 February 2020***