

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Consultation on the school year

What do you think?



This document was written by Welsh Government.
It is an accessible version of: Consultation on the
school year.

November 2023

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1. How to use this document



This is an accessible document. But you may still need help to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what these words in blue mean on page 31.

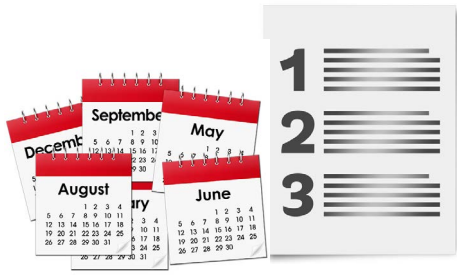


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Where the document says “we”, this means Welsh Government.



For more information email us at: ExploringUseOfSchoolTime@gov.wales.



Page 23 is the list of questions we are asking about the school calendar.

There are 2 different ways you can tell us your thoughts.



1. You can send your answers to us by email. Our email is ExploringUseOfSchoolTime@gov.wales



2. You could send your answers to us by post. Our address is:

School Time Branch
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

2. About the consultation on the school year



The Welsh Government want to hear your thoughts on the **structure** of the school year, also known as the school calendar.



We are thinking about changing the school calendar to suit learners, teachers and families better. This may mean changing the timing of school breaks. We have made this information document to tell you more about our plans.



Research tells us that the school calendar can have an effect on how learners feel and how well they are able to learn. We also know that learners who live in **poverty** or who need extra support in school, are most affected by this, particularly following longer breaks and when terms are very different in length.



We want to make sure the school calendar works better for the way that we live, learn and work today.

So from the 2025 to 2026 school year, we want to give learners and teachers:

2 weeks

- A 2 week break in autumn to help reduce tiredness and improve well-being.

5 weeks

- Make summer a 5 week break to support well-being and learning for pupils who find it more difficult.



- Be able to move the spring break away from Easter to help make terms more equal in length.



- We also want to hear what you think about some other changes we want to make in future.

We are not going to change these things:

**190
teaching days**

- We will not change the number of teaching days during a year (190 days in total).

**School break
13 weeks**

- We will not change the number of school breaks during a year (13 weeks in total).



- We will not change the number of staff training (INSET) days.



- All Public Bank Holidays (like Christmas Day and Easter) will stay the same.

3. Why are we thinking of changing the school calendar?



Research tells us that the **structure** of the school calendar can affect how well learners learn and can also effect the **well-being** of teachers and pupils.

Reason 1: Some learners find it harder to learn for lots of different reasons. We have the chance to make a school calendar to suit them and their families.



Some learners, particularly those who live in poverty and those with **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**, find it hard to get back to learning at school after breaks. Some families say they find it difficult to find childcare and that it costs more money when learners are not at school.

Reason 2: A new calendar could help learners and teachers who are worn out by the end of each term.

Some terms are longer than others. If terms are too long, teachers and learners can be tired and have poorer **well-being** by the end of the term which makes it harder to teach and learn. Learners and teachers could find it easier to rest if some of the break weeks were at different times.



Reason 3: A new school calendar could help learners and teachers do better at school.

In the current school calendar, terms change in length so teachers and learners will sometimes need to cover a topic in less time than in other years. Having less time could mean some learners don't do as well as they could in that term.



We know having term lengths that are the same length can help learners learn better and teachers plan better.



Reason 4: A new school calendar could be better for modern ways of living, learning and working.

The way we live has changed over recent years. However, the school calendar has stayed the same.



We know that many families think that the summer break is too long, as learners can become bored and lonely.



Having school breaks that are more evenly spread across the year can help families better manage their living, learning and working lives.

4. What options are we thinking about?

Option 1

Option 1 – this is what the school calendar looks like now (no change)

**Autumn term
(September to December)**

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in October/November)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April at the same time as Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)

6 weeks



- End of term break: 6 weeks (in July/August)

In Option 1, there are:

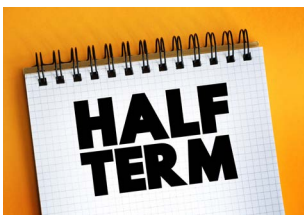
3 Terms

School terms:

There are 3 school terms. Autumn term is the longest term.

School breaks:

There are 1 week breaks that split each term.



There are longer breaks at the end of each term (2 weeks at Christmas, 2 weeks in the spring and 6 weeks in the summer).



Not all schools follow the same term pattern

Other:

Most schools in Wales follow this pattern but not all schools are the same.

Option 2

Option 2 – a new school calendar starting from September 2025

2 weeks



Autumn term (September to December)

- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

1 week



Spring term (January to March/April)

- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week
(in May/June)

5 weeks



- End of term break: 5 weeks
(in July/August)

In Option 2, there are:

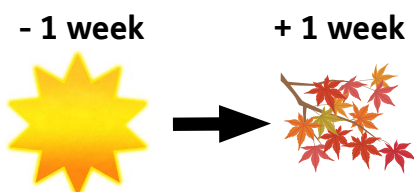
School terms:

Making the 3 school terms more equal in length.

3 Terms

School breaks:

In this option we want to move 1 week of the summer break to the autumn term and make the summer break 1 week shorter. We also want to be able to move the spring break away from Easter. The Easter Public holidays would still be 'days off' school.



Option 3

Option 3 – a new school calendar in the future

We are thinking about 2 stages of changes in Option 3.

Option 3, Stage 1

Autumn term (September to December)

2 weeks



- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in May/June)

5 weeks



- End of term break: 5 weeks (in July/August)

In Option 3, stage 1, there are:

School terms:

Making the 3 school terms more equal in length.

3 Terms

**Same as
Option 2**

School breaks:

Option 3, Stage 1 is the same as Option 2.

Option 3, Stage 2

Autumn term
(September to December)

2 weeks



- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in October/November)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in December/January)

Spring term (January to March/April)

1 week



- Half-term break: 1 week (in February)

2 weeks



- End of term break: 2 weeks (in March/April which could be de-coupled from Easter)

Summer term (April to July)

2 weeks



- Half-term break: 2 weeks (in May/June)

4 weeks



- End of term break: 4 weeks (in July/August)

In Option 3, stage 2, there are:

3 Terms

School terms:

Making the 3 school terms more equal in length.

School breaks:

In this option we want to move 1 more break week to the summer term and make the summer break 1 week shorter. This would make the May half-term break 2 weeks long. This would also make the summer break 4 weeks long.



Other:

In this stage we are thinking about having exam results days in the same week. At the moment, the results days for GCSE exams and AS/A Level exams are in different weeks in the summer break.



5. Timetable

Any changes to the school calendar that are made would be from September 2025 at the earliest. The table below would be what the term dates look like for the first year 2025 to 2026.

Period	Start	End
Autumn term 2025	Monday 1 September	Friday 19 December
Autumn Half Term 2025	Monday 20 October	Friday 31 October
Spring Term 2026	Monday 5 January	Friday 3 April
Spring Half Term 2026	Monday 16 February	Friday 20 February
Summer Term 2026	Monday 20 April	Wednesday 29 July
Summer Half Term 2026	Monday 25 May	Friday 29 May

If a term ends on a Public holiday it is included as part of the term.



This **consultation** will start on 21 November 2023.

The **consultation** will close on 12 February 2024. After people have told us what they think about the **consultation**, Welsh Government Ministers will tell everyone what the new school calendar will look like. The Welsh Government will then work with the people who usually decide school term dates to plan them for the future.



We understand that the suggested changes will take some time for learners, teachers and families to get ready for. This is why lots of time will be given before any changes are made so people can get ready.

6. Questions we are asking about the school calendar

School calendar questions

Question 1

Do you like the current school calendar?

Yes

No

Unsure

Use this box to tell us more about your answer.

Question 2

Imagine that 1 week of the summer break was moved to October to make the October break 2 weeks long instead of 1 week long. This would make the summer break 5 weeks long. Do you like this idea?

Yes

No

Unsure

Use this box to tell us more about your answer.

Question 3

Imagine the spring break takes place at a similar time every year. At the moment the spring break moves so it can be at the same time as Easter. This can make some school terms very long or very short. Do you like the idea of having a spring break at a similar time every year?

Yes

No

Unsure

Use this box to tell us more about your answer.

Question 4

Imagine we have a 2 week break in May or June. We currently have 1 week. This would mean that the summer break would be 1 week shorter. Do you like this idea?

Yes

No

Unsure

Use this box to tell us more about your answer.

Question 5

Do you like the idea of having GCSE, AS and A level exam results days in the same week?

Yes

No

Unsure

Use this box to tell us more about your answer.

Question 6

Please tick any of the boxes that describe you best.

- Age 17 years and under.
- Age 18 years and older.
- I work in education.
- I work in tourism.
- I work in childcare.
- I work full-time.
- I work part-time.
- I am a parent or carer.
- Other.

Question 7

Do you think changing the school calendar would affect the Welsh language?

Yes

No

Unsure

Question 8

What impacts do you think there would be on the Welsh language? How could we reduce any bad impacts and increase good impacts?

Question 9

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your thoughts on the school calendar?

7. Hard words

Consultation

A consultation is when a lot of people are asked what they think about something. This could be in discussions or surveys.

Structure

A pattern of when things happen, like the days of the week.

Well-being

Well-being is being comfortable, healthy or happy.

Poverty

Poverty is about not having enough money to buy food, clothing and a safe place to live.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

A person has additional learning needs (ALN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability and may need extra help with their learning.