

SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES – 2023-2026

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In June 2019 Community Services Committee agreed the school holiday dates for sessions 2020-2023.
- 1.2 The holiday dates for pupils across the Authority require to be set for the next 3 years ie 2023-2026.
- 1.3 To this end, a consultation on school holiday dates was carried out during May 2022 with an aim to set the in-service days for teachers and the holiday dates for pupils across the Authority for 2023-2026. The consultation included parents/carers, pupils and staff. The proposed dates are contained within Appendix 1.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees:
- The school holiday dates for 2023-2026 contained within Appendix 1.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES – 2023-2026

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 A consultation on School Holiday Dates was carried out during May 2022 with an aim to set the in-service days for teachers and the holiday dates for pupils across the Authority for 2023-2026. The consultation included parents/carers, pupils and staff. The proposed dates are contained within Appendix 1.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee agrees:

- The school holiday dates for 2023-2026 contained within Appendix 1.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 In June 2019 Community Services Committee agreed the school holiday dates for session 2020/2023. Following this a consultation was carried out to set the holiday dates for pupils across the Authority for 3 years ie 2023-2026.

4.2 This consultation was carried out with schools, parent councils and pupil councils during May 2022 and the outcome presented to the Head Teacher's, JSC for agreement prior to submission to the Community Services Committee. The proposed school holiday dates for 2023-2026 are contained in Appendix 1.

4.3 JSC members agreed that the proposed dates addressed the feedback from the consultation and that they should be brought forward to Community Services Committee for approval.

4.4 A summary of the responses from the consultation are contained within Appendix 2.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 In order for 3 years of school holiday dates to be published, school holiday dates for session 2023-2026 require to be agreed.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on Education Authorities to provide children and young people with school education

and (in terms of raising standards) requires Authorities to endeavor to secure improvement in the quality of that school education.

6.2 Financial – None

6.3 Legal – None

6.4 HR – None

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities – None

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None

6.5.3 Islands – None

6.6 Risk – Reputational risk to the Education Service if we do not set holiday dates for 2023-2026

6.7 Customer Service – School holiday arrangements for 2023/2026 will be made available to the public via the Council Website.

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne Mcneilly - Policy Lead for Education

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Appendix 1 - School Holiday Dates 2023-2024 to 2025-2026

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – 2023/24		
BREAK	DATES OF ATTENDANCE	
Start of term	Open	Friday 11 th August 2023 & Monday 14 th August Teacher In-service Days
	Open	Tuesday 15 th August 2023 Pupils Return
October	Close	Friday 6 th October 2023
	Open	Monday 23 rd October 2023
November	Close	Friday 24 th November 2023 Monday 27th November 2023 - Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 28 th November 2023
Christmas	Close	Thursday 21 st December 2023
	Open	Thursday 4 th January 2024
February Week	Close	Friday 9 th February 2024 Monday 19th February 2024 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 20 th February 2024
April	Close	Thursday 28 th March 2024
	Open	Monday 15 th April 2024
May	Close	Thursday 23 rd May 2024 Friday 24th May 2022 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 28 th May 2024
	Close	Friday 28 th June 2024

29th March 2024 – Good Friday
 31st March 2024 – Easter Sunday
 1st April 2024 – Easter Monday
 27th May 2024 – Bank Holiday

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – 2024/25		
BREAK	DATES OF ATTENDANCE	
Start of term	Open	Monday 12 th August 2024 & Tuesday 13 th August 2024 Teacher In-service Days
	Open	Wednesday 14 th August 2024 Pupils Return
October	Close	Friday 4 th October 2024
	Open	Monday 21 st October 2024
November	Close	Friday 22 nd November 2024 Monday 25th November 2024 - Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 26 th November 2024
Christmas	Close	Friday 20 th December 2024
	Open	Monday 6 th January 2025
February Week	Close	Friday 7 th February 2025 Monday 17th February 2025 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 18 th February 2025
April	Close	Friday 4 th April 2025
	Open	Tuesday 22 nd April 2025
May	Close	Thursday 22 nd May 2025 Friday 23rd May 2025 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 27 th May 2025
	Close	Tuesday 1 st July 2025

18th April 2025 – Good Friday
20th April 2025 – Easter Sunday
21st April 2025 – Easter Monday
26th May 2025 – Bank Holiday

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – 2025/26		
BREAK	DATES OF ATTENDANCE	
Start of term	Open	Tuesday 12 th August & Wednesday 13 th August 2025 Teacher In-service Days
	Open	Thursday 14 th August 2025 Pupils Return
October	Close	Friday 3 rd October 2025
	Open	Monday 20 th October 2025
November	Close	Friday 21 st November 2025 Monday 24th November 2025 - Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 25 th November 2025
Christmas	Close	Friday 19 th December 2025
	Open	Monday 5 th January 2026
February Week	Close	Friday 6 th February 2026 Monday 16th February 2026 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 17 th February 2026
March	Close	Thursday 2 nd April 2026
April	Open	Monday 20 th April 2026
May	Close	Thursday 21 st May 2026 Friday 22nd May 2026 – Teacher In-service Day
	Open	Tuesday 26 th May 2026
June	Close	Wednesday 1 st July 2026

3rd April 2026 – Good Friday

5th April 2026 – Easter Sunday

6th April 2026 – Easter Monday

25th May 2026 – Bank Holiday

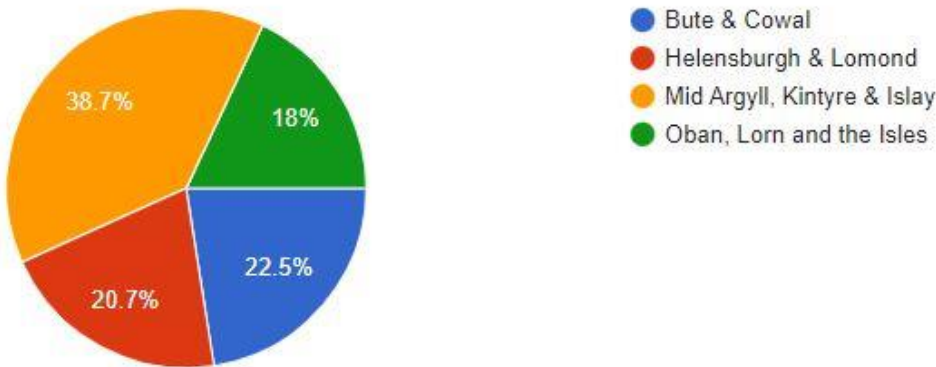


Education



School Holiday Consultation – Results

111 Responses received across Argyll and Bute.

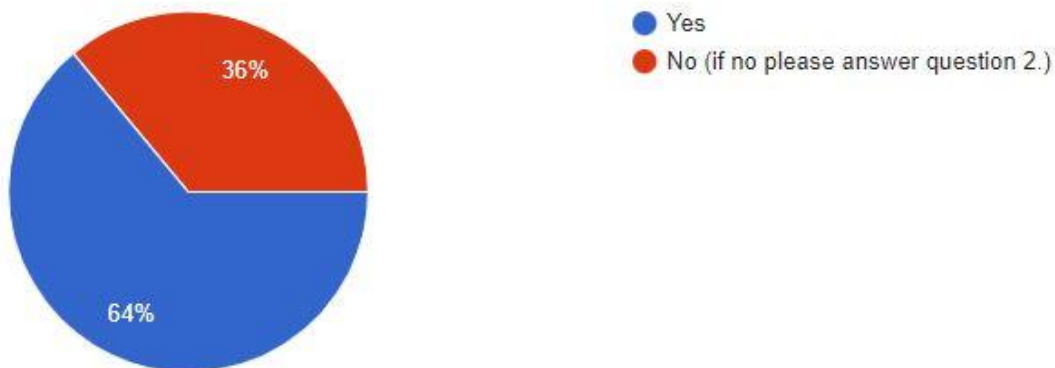


We asked respondents if residing on an Island, to indicate which one.

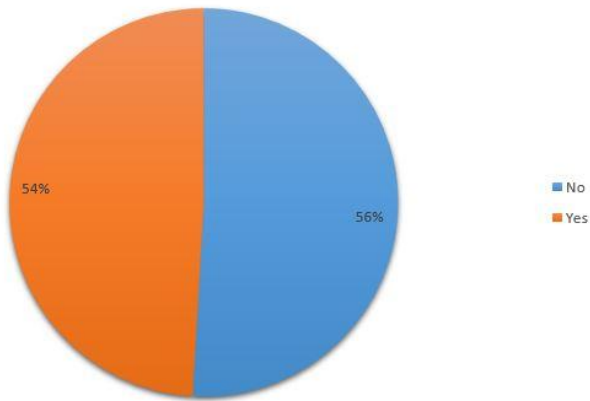
You said: 25% of overall responses were received from those living in or representing an Island.

We asked: Should the pattern of school holiday arrangements, which have been in place for the last 3 years i.e. from 2020-2023 continue?

You said:

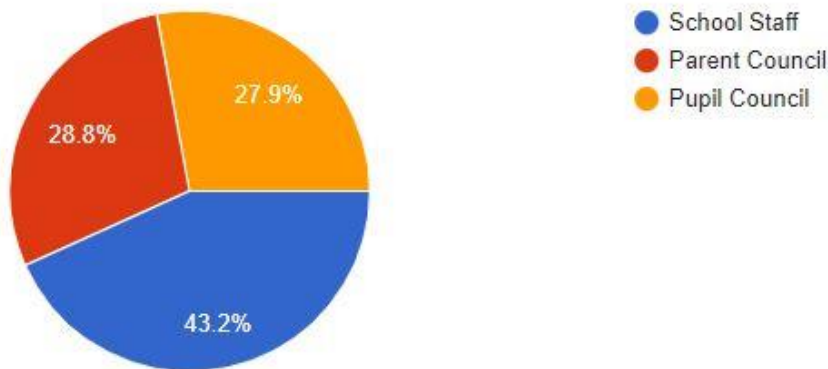


56% of respondents of live on or represent an Island said No; the pattern of school holiday arrangements, which have been in place for the last 3 years i.e. from 2020-2023 should not continue.



We asked: What body do you represent?

You said:



We asked: Please detail any changes you think should be considered in relation to the current pattern of school holidays.

Parent Council Said:

Shortening October holidays
Only comment by one parent was - if Easter weekend could fall either at start of middle to make travelling back easier for holidays.
Would it be possible to align school holidays with those in the rest of the UK, for those who have family and friends in England/Wales/Northern Ireland, there are very few periods when the holidays overlap. In addition please consider scheduling In Service days on bank holidays, to allow parents who work to enjoy bank holidays days with their children. also it would make childcare easier for the In Service days.
Take a week from the summer break and add to the Xmas break.
February week is too early & May holiday is a bit short
Our parent council is very supportive of the change made in recent years to extend the February long weekend to a half-term week and very much hope this remains in place. In addition, we wonder whether something similar might be possible with the November long weekend.

In a small community where the main income stream is during the tourist season, we mostly rely on the winter months to get away on holiday so having a proper opportunity in both November and February would be beneficial - we understand that this would likely mean a shortening of holidays at some other time of year (Easter, summer or October) and may therefore involve more detailed thought and consultation
Would there be the potential for the May Day holiday to be observed rather than the Friday at the end of May?
February week is too close to the children going back to school in January. They are just settling in and then they are off again. Some parents think in-service says are pointless too
Closer alignment with West Dunbartonshire holidays should be considered. When parents work across counties the current situation makes it exceptionally difficult to organise childcare.
Easter being close to the February Half term is always a tricky one. Also it was felt that there was far too many Inset days. Now COVID restrictions have been lifted it is generally felt by parents that there have been far too many with the Holidays as well.
We break up for Christmas too late and its better to attach in service days to holidays so teachers can prep for coming term. I don't like the August full week start, Monday to Friday . I think it's too much for kids of all ages to go straight back into a full week. Also, too much for parents to sort out a full weeks worth of washing and ironing. I do like the February one week break. As far as I know it's only Argyll & Bute that have this full week off so it means cheaper accommodation for families that are planning on going away. In August I dont like how the 2 in service days are the week before the children come back and then its a full week for the children (and staff) as they start new stage. Its a lot for the children, especially the poor primary 1 class. Wish they would go back to the old way of in service Monday/Tuesday or Tuesday/Wednesday then kids back the Wednesday or Thursday. The staff miss the last weekend as brains get back to work mode on the in service days. Its nice to have a week off at a time, like in February, but its a rubbish time of year to have off when the weather is so rubbish. Would much rather a few days holiday and the others could be spread throughout the year, like used to have a holiday in November as well as the in service and helped break up the term. The entire situation needs changed, if I use all of my annual leave and husband uses all of his separately then we still can not cover the amount of school holidays the children have for childcare. Therefore even though we both work full time we are financially strained and emotionally stressed trying to juggle childcare for school holidays and can not afford to have time off spent together as a family apart from some days at Christmas. It will make no difference saying this as it has been said for many years but the education holiday entitlement is completely outdated and needs attention to help families that don't work in schools survive financially.
I do agree about returning to school in August however as it is difficult for the children to have a full first week back after so long off.
October holidays could maybe be cut to 1 week and put in another time such as a few days extra before christmas, as 2 weeks is a long time for October and covering child care at the one time.
There is a minority suggestion (not disagreed with by anyone, as submissions have been anonymous) to move the October holiday back by a week or two to allow for stag season to complete and staking families to holiday within the school holiday period. It is also felt that the Christmas terms is rather long and that this change might positively affect that.
Can the schools break up a day earlier at Xmas? Could the May Bank Holiday be at the end of May? Could the Feb half term be shortened to allow the Xmas holiday?

Pupil Council Said:

The children were ok with the present holiday structure.
We need to have longer holidays at Christmas and definitely not break up the day before Christmas Eve. We live on an Island and ferries do not go Christmas day and New Years Day, plus the weather is bad and so we cannot get off to visit family. This is the time of year we want to see our family on the mainland. We need to break up at least 4 days before Christmas. We would prefer the extra days to come off the summer holidays which are very long.
A longer time for Christmas holidays - 2 or 3 days
Slightly later February week
There should be a longer break at Christmas . The holidays should begin earlier to allow people to get off islands and travel to visit family
Christmas holiday begins far too close to Christmas. We could do with finishing on 19th/20th. Does not allow time to travel to mainland to visit family. All staff and pupils exhausted.
The summer in-service days this year are on show day. Pupils expressed concern that parents who work in school won't be able to accompany them to dancing/outside of school clubs/events happening

at our annual show.
February holiday could be a week earlier as it used to be.
Happy with October and summer holiday as it is.
As Christmas is a time for seeing family could the 2 weeks at Christmas be 3 weeks and only 1 week in October.
Longer in summer because the weather is better
Comments from the pupil focus group One week in Easter to allow for us to finish earlier for summer. One week would be more than enough. It would be better for teaching staff to have more time with Seniors ahead of SQA examinations. Like the February week because it allowed for a break in the term between Jan and April. We would like to finish up earlier for Summer – the 1st of July is too late this year.
Our Pupil Council would like to start back school on a Wednesday, so a part week rather than a full week.
Take a week off the summer holiday and add to the Xmas break so mums and dads can be organised for Xmas.
We would prefer to have one week in October instead of two.

School Staff Said:

Staff felt it is important that the summer holiday should be 6 weeks long including 6 weekends. Another suggestion was that the February break was too soon after returning after Christmas. The October Holiday is usually the first two weeks in October but this session it was the 2nd and 3rd. The first two weeks is preferred. 2 days inservice at August then one in November, Feb and May please.
Some staff would prefer the in-service days at the start of Term 1 to be closer to the beginning of a week, meaning the term does not start with a full teaching week. Some staff would prefer to break off 1-2 days earlier at Christmas and return 1-2 days earlier in January.
However, staff also stated that they would be happy to maintain current arrangements.
More equal terms - e.g. the one between Christmas and February is very short whilst the one between Easter and summer is extremely long. This is particularly difficult for teaching and learning. Ending so close to Christmas is particularly difficult and would be better for the end of term to finish earlier and return sooner.
School staff would like to see the February holiday moved so that it happens in the middle of the term. For session 2022/23 the February holiday happens 4 weeks after pupils return to school leaving 7 weeks after. For continuity of learning it would be better to be split in the middle. Also the summer term is very long and only has an inservice and public holiday. Is there scope for moving some additional days to this term, especially as the weather tends to be better during these months allowing everyone time to spend outdoors. Finally it would be helpful if ALL council offices were either open or closed on the May public holiday
A longer period from Christmas to February half term would be beneficial and then from February to Easter (where possible as Easter dates are changeable). This would make curriculum delivery after Christmas and after Easter far more enriching as it would not be a very short session in school followed by a lengthy one. Thank you!
Staff in both schools gave the following feedback; A couple of days should be taken from the beginning of the summer holidays and added to the Christmas - 1 at beginning and 1 at end to allow staff to enjoy Christmas and visit family on the mainland. This is a time of year when sickness is more prevalent so staff often feel that they haven't had a holiday because it's so short and also very busy. Most staff host Christmas celebrations/ family events and are exhausted because we finish so late. There is a high level of tourists visiting the island at this time of year and staff struggle to get food they want because of the late finish. Staff don't want to lose the February week

<p>Consideration should be given to major local events at the holiday planning stage. This year - Aug 22 Inservice days clash with the Islay Show. Businesses close on this Thursday to enable islanders to participate in the events. Fairs/ Stalls visit the island providing opportunities and experiences for our children that they don't often get.</p> <p>Children dance, showcase animals , vegetables, baking, plants etc- all important for community participation.</p>
<p>February holidays should be shorter and days added to summer holidays</p>
<p>67% Retain Holidays 33% Change Holidays</p> <p>The holiday schedule should allow for the summer break to start in June, not July. Less in February added on to summer break, finish earlier in June.</p> <p>More in line with neighbouring authorities (West Dun) and ensuring 6 full weeks for teachers in the summer. A long weekend in Feb (Friday Monday off) would allow this and the May holidays.</p> <p>For a couple of years we were finishing for the Summer term into a date in July could the finish be late June if possible please.</p> <p>This year and next year the February holiday does not match with any of the surrounding local authorities. Whilst for a fair chunk of Argyll & Bute this probably isn't an issue for most staff. However, it is problematic for those who live in other authorities. Many school staff, both primary and secondary, in the Rothesay, Dunoon and Hermitage clusters live in other authorities and therefore are not able to have some of time (2 or 3 days) off with their children which seems unfair. This has the potential to lead to staff taking their children out of school as we are already restricted to when we can have time off.</p> <p>More In line with East West Dunbartonshire.</p> <p>I think the holiday pattern should be more in line with authorities such as Glasgow City Council and West/East Dunbartonshire council as there are many staff/pupils from these areas that will have parents and children with drastically different holidays at times which is difficult to manage.</p> <p>Reduce the October break to one week and add this on elsewhere, possibly the summer holidays or September/May bank holidays.</p> <p>May and September public holidays should be school holidays</p> <p>Holidays should be broadly in line with Glasgow, as this causes difficulties for teachers with children.</p> <p>It would be useful if they were more in line with nearby local authorities, eg. West Dunbartonshire. A number of teaching staff have children attending schools in these other authorities and it can be challenging to manage childcare when holidays do not match up.</p> <p>The end of the school year should be during the month of June (not July)</p> <p>I think a fortnight in October is a little too long in term for Senior School pupils with an exam diet.</p> <p>Hermitage Academy and all of the Helensburgh & Lomond Area schools should align their holidays with schools in West Dunbartonshire Council area.</p> <p>The pattern is not a problem but many staff members have commented that they are not happy with the Summer holidays edging forward to the point where we are into July now. The other concern, coming mainly from teachers who are parents, is the late close before Christmas which leaves little time for cleaning, shopping, food prep etc. Many thanks.</p>
<p>Ensure that there are 6 whole weeks in the summer break. More equal length terms should be considered.</p>
<p>Shorter February break to allow longer block of teaching time - particularly important for senior phase students</p> <p>Earlier finish at Christmas with additional days taken off summer break</p>
<p>Staff feel that the February week is too long and this should be reduced to a long weekend, with the additional days added to the beginning or end of the summer holidays. Staff also feel that the Christmas holidays should always begin before 23rd December.</p>
<p>Comments from staff:</p>

<p>February holiday + INSET far too long. Most secondary teachers would agree with this statement. This is the term when pupils/staff can least afford to be absent with deadlines/practical exams (can be from early Feb for music) etc. Also with the timetable this last session it was almost a fortnight between seeing S4.</p> <p>I would prefer that the Feb mid-term was not one week + in-service (6 school days). The days removed from the Feb holiday could be then allocated to the end date of the summer term, therefore reinstating an end of term in June.</p> <p>Im happy with the holiday pattern as a whole, I dont think it needs any changes. However looking at the dates every year with more care and tweak them if necessary would avoid having Christmas holiday starting on a Wednesday 23rd or 22nd of December, mid week, as was the case the least two years. Not only it is very inconvenient to have a holiday starting mid week but these last three days of school are also mainly a waste of teaching time really.</p> <p>am more than happy with the current pattern, if that helps. You know the reason behind (the affordability of travelling to Poland in February, rather than in Dec/Jan)</p>
<p>Summer holidays should always be 6 full weeks for staff.</p> <p>Christmas holidays - we should not be working after 21st December, this causes real problems for those of us on Island communities if we are travelling to family.</p> <p>Reduce the February break to make previous points possible.</p>
<p>There should be at least one in-service day, but preferably two in-service days, after each holiday, and before the school re-opens. This would enable staff teams to plan, prep, review/evaluate together more effectively every term.</p> <p>In-service days should be at the start of a week (not at the end/before a weekend) which would also mean that pupils would have shorter weeks for the start of term. This would be beneficial to all, especially after longer holidays.</p> <p>The summer holiday should be shortened. This would reduce some of the pressure working parents experience with child care and taking family holidays. It would also enable there to be an increase in the number of in-service days and extra holiday days at other times of the year.</p> <p>The Christmas holiday could be extended (in December, not January).</p> <p>The Easter holiday could be extended and the February break reduced to a long weekend.</p> <p>If there were in-service days at the beginning of January and after the Easter holiday there wouldn't need to be in-service days in February.</p> <p>A general pattern of six weeks at school then a holiday (even a long weekend) would help to improve everybody's wellbeing and work output (learners and staff), and also enable families to have more opportunities to be able to take holidays together, given their own work commitments.</p> <p>With reference to all of the above: Eight weeks from school opening in mid-August to the October holiday is too long and then there isn't an in-service day again until the end of November and although pupils have an extra day to their weekend, staff don't. If there was an in-service day or two after the October holiday then this November long weekend could be a long weekend holiday for everyone. Another consideration is that the current pattern of a holiday at the beginning of February is too soon to have a holiday after returning in January.</p>
<p>There was a mixed response with 7 Faculty areas saying no and 3 saying yes. A number of comments from staff about the week in February causing disruption to the preparation for SQA examinations. Comments were also made about the production of folios/assessment pieces and the break in February causes disruption to this. The break causes a dip in motivation f young people. A number of other comments about finishing too late in June or this session July. Staff seem to want to finish a little earlier like other local authorities.</p>
<p>A mixed response from the staff body with the vote going 6 to no and 4 saying yes to keep the current holiday pattern. Two main concerns were raised - if we are trying to raise attainment why are we putting a week long holiday in February? The Summer term seems to be going on longer. It might be better having a shorter break in February and finishing earlier in June.</p>
<p>One week in October instead of two. Holidays re-instated in May and later start in August.</p>
<p>Inset days in the first term should be a Monday/Tuesday ensuring a 3 day first week for pupils</p>
<p>More equality in length of terms (some very short and some very long). Better co-ordination in regard to Bank Holidays (all council employees having the same Bank Holidays)</p>
<p>Shorter summer longer Christmas</p>
<p>There should be at least one in-service day, but preferably two in-service days, after each holiday, and before the school re-opens. This would enable staff teams to plan, prep, review/evaluate together more</p>

effectively every term.

In-service days should be at the start of a week (not at the end/before a weekend) which would also mean that pupils would have shorter weeks for the start of term. This would be beneficial to all, especially after longer holidays.

The summer holiday should be shortened. This would reduce some of the pressure working parents experience with child care and taking family holidays. It would also enable there to be an increase in the number of in-service days and extra holiday days at other times of the year.

The Christmas holiday could be extended (in December, not January).

The Easter holiday could be extended and the February break reduced to a long weekend.

If there were in-service days at the beginning of January and after the Easter holiday there wouldn't need to be in-service days in February.

A general pattern of six weeks at school then a holiday (even a long weekend) would help to improve everybody's wellbeing and work output (learners and staff), and also enable families to have more opportunities to be able to take holidays together, given their own work commitments.

With reference to all of the above: Eight weeks from school opening in mid-August to the October holiday is too long and then there isn't an in-service day again until the end of November and although pupils have an extra day to their weekend, staff don't. If there was an in-service day or two after the October holiday then this November long weekend could be a long weekend holiday for everyone.

Another consideration is that the current pattern of a holiday at the beginning of February is too soon to have a holiday after returning in January.

The February holiday and October holiday should be in the middle of their respective terms. For example, the February holiday comes too soon after the Christmas holiday

The 1st July needs reviewed as its too late. We are owed a week because of covid.

No, July is too late to finish.

We asked: Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) were invited to provide a response to the School Holiday Consultation.

They Said: They stated **yes**, the pattern of school holiday arrangements, which have been in place for the last 3 years i.e. from 2020-2023 should continue

Responses represented all four locality areas of Argyll and Bute.