



The Charter School

Headteacher: C Hicks MA

21st June 2018

Dear Parents/ Carers

Consultation on Term Dates for Academic Year 2019-20 at The Charter School

As most parents will be aware, The Local Governing Body and Headship Team of The Charter School consulted last year regarding possible changes to our academic year, but decided against proceeding at that point, largely because of concerns that a small number of parents expressed about the consultation process/ timing (it ran over the summer holidays). We would like to consult again, this time with a fuller process and more suitable timing, regarding the academic year 2019-20 and beyond. We have not been able to consult earlier in the academic year since Southwark had not until this point released provisional Local Authority dates for 2019-20, on which The Charter School bases its dates.

Proposal for 2019-20

In summary, the proposal is as follows:

- To introduce a two-week half-term break during the autumn term 2019, rather than the one-week break currently in place. The half term would likely run from Monday 21st October to Friday 1st November (TBC)
- To begin the 2019-20 academic year for school staff Thursday 29th August and for students Monday 2nd September (29th and 30th August will be Inset Days)
- To keep the standard 190 days of teaching for students in the academic year in addition to the 5 standard INSET Days. Dates for later in the academic year 2019-20 will be confirmed when we receive fuller and more final information from Southwark about term dates.

The **provisional** proposed term dates for Autumn Term 2019-20 are as follows:

Autumn Term

INSET Days:	Thursday 29 th August and Friday 30 th August 2019
First Day for Students:	Monday 2 nd September 2019
Half Term:	Monday 21 st October 2019 – Friday 1 st November 2019
Students Return:	Monday 4 th November 2019
End of Term:	Friday 21 st December 2019

Background

Southwark Council sets the academic year dates for all maintained schools within the borough. The term dates for foundation, voluntary aided schools and academies are set by the Local Governing Body or Trust of each school with reference to Southwark term dates. All schools are expected to have 190 school days for teaching and to observe public holidays. Additionally, schools have an additional 5 standard INSET days, which individual schools can take when they choose.

The 2018-19 academic year is as follows:

Autumn Term: 15 weeks (75 days)	Spring Term: 12 weeks (60 days)	Summer Term: 12 weeks (60 days)
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Reasons for The Proposal

We feel as a school that there are a number of compelling reasons for this proposal:

- The Charter School East Dulwich, Kingsdale, Dulwich College, JAGs and Alleyn's ALL currently operate a 2-week autumn half term. This means that The Charter School North Dulwich is the ONLY secondary school in the local area operating a 1-week autumn half term.
- A large number of other secondary schools across London are either already operating a 2-week autumn half term or plan to introduce one in the very near future.
- There is compelling evidence that operating a 2-week autumn term reduces staff absence and improves staff well-being in the tough winter months, particularly November and December. This reduces the need to cover absent staff, reduces staff workload and helps to retain high quality staff, all of which benefits both school finances and student learning.
- There is also compelling evidence that operating a 2-week autumn half term reduces student absence and improves student well-being in the tough winter months, particularly November and December. This creates less stress for families, fewer childcare issues for younger students and naturally benefits students' learning. It is likely that such a move would also benefit students' mental health.
- A two-week autumn half-term may also enable some families, if their circumstances allow, to take a holiday at a time when costs are cheaper than in the traditional half-term break. This supports families at a time when living standards are under pressure and also means it is less likely that parents will feel the need to take their children on holidays during term time, which negatively affects student learning and can lead to court proceedings or penalty notices.

Consultation

The consultation will run for two and a half weeks from Friday 22nd June until Wednesday 11th July 2018. The school is actively considering all viewpoints as part of the consultation process. Parents/ carers who wish to submit comments can do so in the following ways:

- By attending a consultation event with Mr Hicks Thursday 5th July at 5.30pm
- By email for the attention of Mr Hicks at headteacher@charter.southwark.sch.uk

By confidential online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WX99GSP> by 9am on Wednesday 11th July 2018.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter. We will inform parents and carers of the decision following this consultation before students break up for the summer holidays.

Yours sincerely



Christian Hicks
Headteacher



Elizabeth Brown
Chair of Governors