

28th February 2022

Seeking your views on Corby Technical School's term dates

Dear Parents and Carers,

When Corby Technical School opened in 2012, we adopted the same five-term model as Brooke Weston Academy. At the time, the five-term model was growing in popularity as it created five equal length terms (8-weeks) and holidays throughout the year. This was believed to provide a more regular structure for learning than the traditional three-term model which many people felt had an overly long summer break with potential loss of learning. The debate has moved on since with a general shift nationally to a six-term model with a marginally shorter summer break than the old three-term calendar. Currently, only us and Brooke Weston Academy use the five-term model in Northamptonshire.

Under both the six-term and five-term models, schools open for 190 teaching days each year after accounting for additional bank holidays and teacher training days that fall within term time. Therefore, both options offer the same amount of teaching days for students.

The five-term model works effectively for some schools, though the number using this model is not growing. However, having a different term pattern to most other schools presents us with some challenges which are set out below. Our current term times can make life complicated for families with children in other schools whose holidays fall on different dates. In particular, it creates additional barriers to recruiting teachers, who are already on the six-term model, and retaining teachers, who have children in the six-term model. For example, a family with children in Corby Technical School and also a local primary school might need to take leave from work or arrange additional childcare during our holiday times. Our teachers also need to arrange additional childcare as they are not able to take their holidays during our term, although their own children's school may be on holiday. In the face of national teacher recruitment challenges, we are eager to overcome any additional obstacles to ensure we deliver the highest quality education now and in the future.

Exam timetables are also scheduled using the national six-term model, meaning that our Year 11 and Sixth Form students are required to sit some of their public exams during our school holidays. Students in schools using the six-term model will have no exams during their May half-term and are encouraged to use this time for exam preparation, revision or attend additional study sessions during the holiday. Local community groups and the council also run many 'school holiday' clubs and activities during the six-term model half terms, when our students are in school.

As it seems unlikely other schools regionally or nationally will choose to adopt the five-term model, and after reviewing these factors, we think on balance that moving to the six-term model may be beneficial for Corby Technical School. Therefore, we are seeking your feedback on whether you believe Corby Technical School should change its term dates and adopt a six-term model like North Northamptonshire local authority and most of the Trust's primary and secondary schools.

What could this mean for you?

At this stage, we are only seeking your views on the idea of moving towards a six-term model or staying as we are. It is important to say absolutely no decision has been made. We really do want your views so we can gauge the feeling from our school community about the idea. All feedback that is received will help the school leadership team, governors and the Trust decide what, if anything, to do next.

If we did go ahead, the dates that the school opens to students and for staff training days would change. The school would continue to open for 190 teaching days and five staff training days, just as it does now. We have included an example of what the six-term calendar could look like at the bottom of this letter.

We are also conscious that you may have planned holidays this year based on the five-term model, so we will provide plenty of notice if a transition is made.

We are clear that, should we decide to transition to the six-term model, there will be no other significant changes. For example, all staff will continue in their current roles.

How to submit your views and feedback

We are inviting you to share your views by completing our online survey anonymously that can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CTStermdates>.

The survey will close at 12.00pm on Tuesday 11th April 2023. After this date, the feedback will be reviewed by the school leadership and will help us to make a decision.

We are also running a drop-in session for parents, carers and other members of the local community to learn more or ask any initial questions on Thursday 2nd March 2023 between 3.30pm and 4.30pm. Angela Reynolds (Principal), Gary Campbell (Chair of Governors), and Andy Burns (Chief Education Officer, Secondary) will all be in attendance to share more detail about the proposal, with time available at the end to answer your questions. Parents can join the session by clicking the link on our parents' evening booking system.

You can also send any questions to enquiries@corbytechnicalschool.org.

We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Reynolds
Principal
Corby Technical School

Andy Burns
Chief Education Officer
Brooke Weston Trust

Gary Campbell
Chair of Governors
Corby Technical School

Example Term Dates for 2023/24 if a transition is made

Term	Starts	Finishes
Term 1	Mon 21 Aug 2023*	Fri 13 Oct 2023
Holiday period	Mon 16 Oct 2023	Fri 27 Oct 2023
Term 2	Mon 30 Oct 2023	Fri 22 Dec 2023
Holiday period	Mon 25 Dec 2023	Wed 3 Jan 2024
Term 3	Thu 4 Jan 2024	Fri 16 Feb 2024
Holiday period	Mon 19 Feb 2024	Fri 23 Feb 2024
Term 4	Mon 26 Feb 2024	Thu 28 Mar 2024
Holiday period	Tues 2 Apr 2024	Fri 12 Apr 2024
Term 5	Mon 15 Apr 2024	Fri 24 May 2024
Holiday period	Tues 28 May 2024	Fri 31 May 2024
Term 6	Mon 3 Jun 2024	Thu 25 Jul 2024
Holiday period	Fri 26 July 2024	Fri 30 Aug 2024

*please note the period between Mon 21 Aug and Thu 31 Aug falls in the academic year 2022/2023

Proposed training days for staff (school closed to students)
Fri 1 Sept 2023
Fri 22 Dec 2023
Thu 4 Jan 2024
Wed 24 Jul 2024
Thu 25 Jul 2024

Example six-term model dates from 2024/25

Term	Starts	Finishes
Autumn Term (1)	Mon 2 Sep 2024	Fri 25 Oct 2024
Half term holiday	Mon 28 Oct 2024	Fri 1 Nov 2024
Autumn Term (2)	Mon 4 Nov 2024	Fri 20 Dec 2024
Christmas holiday	Mon 23 Dec 2024	Wed 1 Jan 2025
Spring term (1)	Thu 2 Jan 2025	Fri 14 Feb 2025
Half term holiday	Mon 17 Feb 2025	Fri 21 Feb 2025
Spring term (2)	Mon 24 Feb 2025	Fri 4 Apr 2025
Easter holiday	Mon 7 Apr 2025	Mon 21 Apr 2025
Summer term (1)	Tue 22 Apr 2025	Fri 23 May 2025
Half term holiday	Mon 26 May 2025	Fri 30 May 2025
Summer term (2)	Mon 2 Jun 2025	Tue 22 Jul 2025
Summer holiday	Wed 23 Jul 2025	

Proposed training days for staff (school closed to students)
Mon 2 Sep 2024
Tue 3 Sep 2024
Thu 2 Jan 2025
Fri 3 Jan 2025
Mon 30 Jun 2025