



Friday 12th February 2021

## Dear parents,

Thank you for your feedback regarding our school calendar for next year. As parents ourselves, we appreciate and understand the concerns raised by some of you. While we considered how we might be able to align the calendar more closely to the Doncaster LA proposed calendar for all schools, we revisited what was important to us.

We came up with this list:

1. Shared staff days - We need 10 staff days throughout the year. This is to ensure the quality of our teachers and the quality of our expeditions. We cannot lose these, and we must have them aligned across all phases. If we don't have these, we cannot be XP schools.
2. The calendar must underpin the delivery of learning expeditions. Interestingly, we did work earlier this year and decided to move from five, eight week long, expeditions to three, twelve week long, expeditions. Eight weeks is a bit too short, and sixteen weeks is a bit too long. The calendar we proposed allowed us to fit this new expedition format into the five terms.
3. All schools in our Trust must have the same holiday pattern, across both Secondary and Primary. Again, this is for our staff to work together across phases and develop even further.

These are the three things we **must** have to be the best XP schools we can be.

When we received feedback from some of our parents regarding the difficulties of moving to our proposed calendar, we decided we needed to consult with parents to resolve the issues. For us to consult meaningfully, we needed at least one alternative calendar that would deliver the above three things, while aligning better with the LA calendar.

The LA calendar has moved much closer to XP's calendar, copying our October two week holiday, so the holiday pattern was only different during February, March, April and May, with only three weeks of difference.



We modelled the various options, and we found that because the LA have fixed the Easter holidays (which don't now lie within the calendared easter), the best fit to the above three things, was actually the calendar that best aligned with the LA calendar.

We shared this with our Heads of School, and we agreed that we actually preferred this new option to the original.

We need feedback from staff, parents and community stakeholders, so we have created a Google Form for you to provide your feedback on both the originally proposed calendar, shared last Friday, and the newly proposed calendar (**Option 3**), which the Trust **strongly prefer** because of the reasons above.

We may not be able to please everyone, but based on your feedback, we will choose one option from these for all schools across all phases, because our rationale requires that we work collaboratively together to deliver the best educational experience for our children.

We will honour any holidays already booked by parents. Any other issues, please contact your school.

We look forward to your feedback.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gwyn ap Harri'.

Gwyn ap Harri  
CEO  
XP Trust

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P.S. I'd like to publicly praise Neil McAllister from the LA for producing a rationalised school calendar for Doncaster. I know it has been a project for him for a number of years.



## Timeline of Trust action

1. We received a complaint regarding the new calendar on Monday 8th February. We immediately called a meeting with the Local Governing Committee of both Norton schools, and we met on Tuesday evening.
2. Our CEO stated that to resolve the issues of the complaint, we would consult parents, and while the Trust have no legal obligation to consult, and are able to set the calendar however we want, the right thing to do would be to consult with parents, and it was recognised that in normal times, this most certainly would have happened. A post on the website of both schools stated the Trust would consult with parents on Tuesday evening.
3. The Executive team met on Wednesday to agree an approach to this issue, and agreed that if we were to consult meaningfully, we would need to present a viable alternative calendar. To do this, we revisited our priorities as a Trust and the rationale of the current calendar.
4. On Thursday, the CEO worked on the alternatives as well as speaking with the person who wrote the first complaint, even though this shortcut the complaints procedure. The conversation was constructive, collegiate and positive. The Executive team met with the Heads of all the schools of the Trust, and during this process, we realised that all our priorities could be met by aligning much more closely with the newly rationalised calendar proposed by the LA. Because this was a change for all schools in the Trust, we decided to sleep on this work, and see how we all felt in the morning.
5. On Friday, we finalised the work, and all HoS and Exec formed a consensus that we favoured the calendar that aligns more closely with the newly proposed and rationalised LA calendar. Accordingly, on the same day both calendars were put out for parental feedback, to be ratified by Directors at the next meeting on 3rd March 2021.

We must state that this work happened because we considered parent voice. We must state that the Trust were not influenced at all by wider, unhelpful comments. Saying this, we totally recognise that our communication in this matter was not in line with our high standards of communication to parents of, “no alarms and no surprises”, which certainly was not the case here. While we had no legal obligation to consult, we apologise for the stress this has caused within the community, especially during these unprecedented times. It has caused us stress too. It would be churlish of us to criticise the quality of some parent communication, when ours was lacking also.

# XP.

T R U S T



We absolutely thrive on critique and welcome constructive parent voice, and we have shown this through our work to create a win-win solution.

We hope the parents who raised concerns will recognise that we are putting forward a calendar change that will affect the whole of the XP Trust community, not just to address the concerns of individual parents, so we can all benefit together.

We look forward to celebrating the great work we are already doing within all our schools, the amazing expedition work, the upgrading technology and, going forward, how we can strategically enhance all our schools through our Trust surplus resources.



## Original: XP Trust Calendar 2021/22

**August**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**September**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**October**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**November**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**December**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**January**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**February**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

**March**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**April**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**May**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**June**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**July**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Key	School Days	Staff Days
School Days	Term 1 31st August - 15th October	17th & 20th September
Holidays	Term 2 1st November - 17th December	19th & 22nd November
Staff Days	Term 3 4th January - 4th March	28th & 31st January
Holidays (except for Y11's)	Term 4 21st March - 20th May	14th & 19th April
	Term 5 6th June - 22nd July	24th & 27th June



## Option 3 : XP Trust Calendar 2021/22

**August**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**September**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**October**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**November**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**December**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**January**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**February**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

**March**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**April**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**May**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**June**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**July**

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Key	School Days	Staff Days
School Days	Term 1A 31st August - 15th October	17th & 20th September
Holidays	Term 1B 1st November - 17th December	19th & 22nd November
Staff Days	Term 2A 4th January - 11th February	28th & 31st January
	Term 2B 21st February - 1st April	11th & 14th March
	Term 3A 19th April - 27th May	24th & 27th June
	Term 3B 6th June - 22nd July	