

2027

FREE DOWNLOAD

South African School Year Planner

Term dates, public holidays, long weekends and a term-by-term planning guide for principals, heads and school leaders.

Plan smarter for teaching, assessment, sport, staff leave and family time.

- ✓ 2027 public school terms (DBE)
- ✓ Every public holiday, and which ones close school
- ✓ A term-by-term planning checklist for school leaders
- ✓ Assessment and exam planning tips
- ✓ Independent school terms: ISASA/SAHISA Central Region, 4-term and 3-term
- ✓ Long weekends and holiday breaks
- ✓ The head's year: governance, finance and people dates
- ✓ A one-page guide to share with parents

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Dates checked against the 2027 public school calendar (Government Gazette No. 52178, 25 February 2025) and the ISASA/SAHISA Central Region 2027 calendar (updated October 2025). Always confirm dates with your own school.

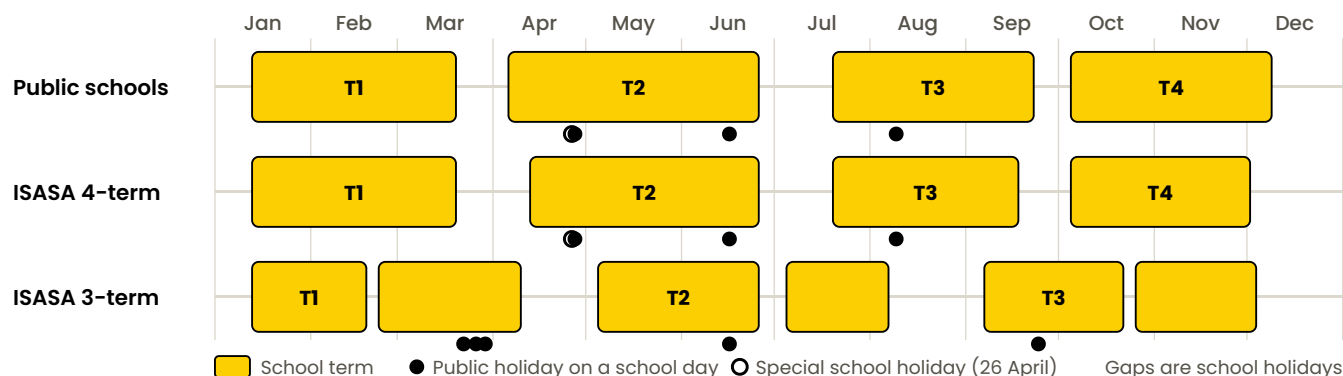


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2027 school term dates

Public schools and ISASA/SAHISA Central Region independent schools, at a glance and in full.



Public schools Department of Basic Education · Government Gazette No. 52178

TERM	LEARNERS	EDUCATORS	SCHOOL DAYS
Term 1	Wed 13 January – Fri 19 March	Start Mon 11 Jan	48
Term 2	Tue 6 April – Fri 25 June	Same as learners	56
Term 3	Tue 20 July – Wed 22 September	Same as learners	46
Term 4	Tue 5 October – Wed 8 December	Finish Fri 10 Dec	47
Total: 42 weeks			197 (201 for educators)

Independent: 4-term calendar

TERM	DATES	DAYS
Term 1	Wed 13 January – Fri 19 March	48
Term 2	Tue 13 April – Fri 25 June	51
Term 3	Tue 20 July – Fri 17 September	43
Term 4	Tue 5 October – Wed 1 December	42
Total, plus 10 Saturdays		184

Independent: 3-term calendar

TERM	DATES	DAYS
Term 1	Wed 13 January – Fri 9 April Half term: closes Thu 18 Feb (12h00), returns Tue 23 Feb	58
Term 2	Wed 5 May – Fri 6 August Half term: closes Fri 25 Jun, returns Mon 5 Jul	62
Term 3	Tue 7 September – Fri 3 December Half term: closes Thu 21 Oct (12h00), returns Tue 26 Oct	61
Total, plus 10 Saturdays		181

About the independent school dates

These come from the ISASA/SAHISA Central Region 2027 calendar (updated October 2025). ISASA publishes it as a guideline only: member schools don't have to follow it, and individual schools set their own dates. Other ISASA regions publish their own calendars. Always check your own school's calendar.



2027 public holidays

Every public holiday in 2027, and whether it closes school on each calendar.

DATE	HOLIDAY	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	ISASA 4-TERM	ISASA 3-TERM
Fri 1 Jan	New Year's Day	In the holidays	In the holidays	In the holidays
Sun 21 Mar	Human Rights Day	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
Mon 22 Mar	Public holiday Human Rights Day falls on a Sunday	In the holidays	In the holidays	School closed
Fri 26 Mar	Good Friday	In the holidays	In the holidays	School closed
Mon 29 Mar	Family Day	In the holidays	In the holidays	School closed
Mon 26 Apr	Special school holiday Schools close; most workplaces stay open	School closed	School closed	In the holidays
Tue 27 Apr	Freedom Day	School closed	School closed	In the holidays
Sat 1 May	Workers' Day	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
Wed 16 Jun	Youth Day	School closed	School closed	School closed
Mon 9 Aug	National Women's Day	School closed	School closed	In the holidays
Fri 24 Sep	Heritage Day	In the holidays	In the holidays	School closed
Thu 16 Dec	Day of Reconciliation	In the holidays	In the holidays	In the holidays
Sat 25 Dec	Christmas Day	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
Sun 26 Dec	Day of Goodwill	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
Mon 27 Dec	Public holiday Day of Goodwill falls on a Sunday	In the holidays	In the holidays	In the holidays

26 April is a school holiday, not a public holiday

Public and ISASA 4-term schools close on Monday 26 April, the day before Freedom Day. Most workplaces stay open, so remind parents early that they'll need leave or childcare.

Sunday holidays move to Monday

Under the Public Holidays Act, a public holiday that falls on a Sunday is followed by a Monday holiday: 22 March and 27 December in 2027. Saturday holidays don't move, so Workers' Day (Saturday 1 May) brings no day off.

Short weeks to plan around

26–30 April	Three school days at public and ISASA 4-term schools: Monday is a special school holiday and Tuesday is Freedom Day.
14–18 June	Youth Day falls on Wednesday 16 June, in the middle of the usual mid-year examination window.
9–13 August	Women's Day falls on Monday 9 August, during Term 3 at public and ISASA 4-term schools.
20–24 September	ISASA 3-term schools only: Heritage Day falls on Friday 24 September, during Term 3.



Long weekends and school breaks

For planning staff leave, sports tours, camps, parent events and family travel.

Long weekends in 2027

Day off School closed, most workplaces open Take one day's leave Normal working day

FRI
1

SAT
2

SUN
3

New Year's Day 3 days

1–3 January. Before Term 1 starts.

SAT
20

SUN
21

MON
22

Human Rights Day 3 days

20–22 March. In the school holidays at public and ISASA 4-term schools.

FRI
26

SAT
27

SUN
28

MON
29

Easter 4 days

26–29 March. Take leave on 23 to 25 March to join the two weekends: ten days off for three days' leave.

SAT
24

SUN
25

MON
26

TUE
27

Freedom Day 4 days

24–27 April. Four days for learners. Working parents need leave or care on Monday 26 April.

SAT
7

SUN
8

MON
9

National Women's Day 3 days

7–9 August. During Term 3 at public and ISASA 4-term schools.

FRI
24

SAT
25

SUN
26

Heritage Day 3 days

24–26 September. In the spring break at public and ISASA 4-term schools.

THU
16

FRI
17

SAT
18

SUN
19

Day of Reconciliation 4 days

16–19 December. Take Friday 17 December off for a four-day weekend.

SAT
25

SUN
26

MON
27

Christmas 3 days

25–27 December. Monday 27 December is a public holiday because the Day of Goodwill falls on a Sunday.

School breaks

Public schools

Autumn Sat 20 March –
Mon 5 April

Winter Sat 26 June –
Mon 19 July

Spring Thu 23 September
– Mon 4 October

Summer From
Thu 9 December
(learners)

ISASA 4-term

Autumn Sat 20 March –
Mon 12 April

Winter Sat 26 June –
Mon 19 July

Spring Sat 18 September –
Mon 4 October

Summer From
Thu 2 December

ISASA 3-term

Half term Thu 18 Feb (from
12h00) –
Mon 22 Feb

Autumn Sat 10 April –
Tue 4 May

Half term Sat 26 June –
Sun 4 July

Winter Sat 7 August –
Mon 6 September

Half term Thu 21 Oct (from
12h00) –
Mon 25 Oct

Summer From
Sat 4 December

Planning tip: avoid booking tours and camps in the first or last week of a term, when settling in, assessment and reports need everyone in school.



The school leader's 2027 planner

A term-by-term checklist for principals, heads and leadership teams. In a 3-term year, the Term 2 and Term 3 tasks fall in your second term (May to August).

Before Term 1

December 2026 – January 2027

- ☐ Publish the 2027 calendar to staff and parents, with your school's own dates added
- ☐ Plan the opening days: at public schools, educators start on Monday 11 January, two days before learners
- ☐ Confirm the School Development Plan priorities from last year's self-evaluation
- ☐ Set the year's assessment programme and moderation dates for each phase
- ☐ Diarise the year's SGB or board meetings and staff development days
- ☐ Plan induction for new staff and new families

Every term

The rhythm that keeps a term on track

- ☐ Week 1: agree the term's focus with staff and send parents the term calendar
- ☐ Timetable lesson observations and at least two professional development meetings
- ☐ Mid-term: review attendance and learner progress, and plan support for learners at risk
- ☐ Share the term's assessment dates with learners and parents
- ☐ End of term: reports, moderation and a report to the SGB or board
- ☐ Review progress on the development plan and set next term's priorities

Term 1

January – March

- ☐ Settle new learners, especially in Grade R, Grade 1 and Grade 8
- ☐ Run baseline assessments
- ☐ Hold parent information evenings

Term 2

April – June

- ☐ Plan around the three-day week of 26–30 April
- ☐ Mid-year examinations and reports
- ☐ Staff development check-ins at the half-year

Term 3

July – September

- ☐ Grade 12 preliminary examinations
- ☐ Grade 9 subject choices for 2028
- ☐ 2028 budget, enrolment and staffing

Term 4

October – December

- ☐ Final examinations, and the NSC for Grade 12 (check the DBE or IEB timetable)
- ☐ Year-end reports and prize-giving
- ☐ Publish the 2028 calendar and start the next self-evaluation

Assessment and exam planning tips

Term 4 is short: 42 school days on the ISASA 4-term calendar and 47 at public schools. Fix final examination and moderation dates in Term 3.

Term 2 is the longest public school term (56 school days), which makes it the natural home for mid-year examinations.

Keep tests out of short weeks (see page 3), and send families the assessment calendar at the start of each term so trips avoid test weeks.

Work with Canopy

Mentoring for new and aspiring heads, the Leadership Team Compass, coaching for leadership teams, and support for boards and heads working together. canopyeducation.co.za





The head's year

The governance, finance and people dates that sit behind the term calendar.

Public schools: the duties marked **SASA** come from the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

Independent schools: your constitution, registration conditions and, for NPCs, the Companies Act set the equivalents; ISASA members also have ISASA's requirements.

Governance

SGB or board

- Now** Diarise a governing body meeting in every term. The SGB's constitution must provide for at least one each term. **SASA s18**
- Each year** The SGB meets parents, learners, educators and other staff, each group at least once a year. **SASA s18**
- Term 1** Establish the Representative Council of Learners; every public school with Grade 8 or above must have one. **SASA s11**
- Annually** Review the learner code of conduct. The SGB adopts it after consulting learners, parents and educators. **SASA s8**

Finance

Year: 1 Jan – 31 Dec (SASA s44)

- By 31 Mar** Draw up the 2026 annual financial statements, within three months of the year end. **SASA s42**
- By 30 Jun** Send the audited or examined 2026 statements to the Head of Department, within six months of the year end. **SASA s43**
- Term 3** Prepare the 2028 budget and set the date for the parents' meeting.
- Term 4** Present the 2028 budget to a general meeting of parents, called on at least 30 days' notice, for their approval. **SASA s38**
- Monthly** Reconcile the bank statement with the cash book, and check every payment has a receipt or voucher.

People

Staff and leadership

- Term 1** Induct and pair new staff with a mentor; agree the year's development focus.
- Term 1** Start the appraisal cycle: QMS for state-paid educators at public schools, or your own performance process.
- Breaks** Steer staff leave, training and camps into the school holidays (see page 4).
- Term 3** Plan 2028 staffing: resignations, appointments and, at public schools, the post establishment from the province.
- Term 4** Close the appraisal cycle and agree 2028 roles and timetables.

Learners and families

Admissions to safety

- Term 2** Open 2028 admissions: public schools follow the provincial process and dates; independent schools set their own.
- Each term** Run an evacuation drill and review the safety plan.
- Each term** Report progress to parents, and send the next term's calendar home before the break.
- Term 4** Finalise 2028 class lists, book and stationery lists, and the 2028 calendar.

The head's own year

Block a planning day in each school break, and protect time every week for classrooms, not only the office. Take real leave in at least one break. And find a thinking partner outside the school: a mentor, a coach or a fellow head.

Further reading

Alan Clarke, *The Handbook of School Management* (Kate McCallum, 2007; second edition 2012). A South African handbook on school management, worth keeping on every head's shelf.

Section numbers refer to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. The Act has been amended since, most recently by the BELA Act of 2024, and provinces add their own regulations, so check the current text. Items without a section number are Canopy's planning guidance.

Your 2027 school year

Key dates and a simple checklist for the year ahead.

Shared with you by

Our school follows: ☐ the public school calendar ☐ the ISASA 4-term calendar
☐ the ISASA 3-term calendar ☐ its own calendar

Term dates

TERM	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	ISASA 4-TERM
1	13 Jan – 19 Mar	13 Jan – 19 Mar
2	6 Apr – 25 Jun	13 Apr – 25 Jun
3	20 Jul – 22 Sep	20 Jul – 17 Sep
4	5 Oct – 8 Dec	5 Oct – 1 Dec

No school on these term days

Mon 26 Apr	School holiday Most workplaces are open: plan care
Tue 27 Apr	Freedom Day
Wed 16 Jun	Youth Day
Mon 9 Aug	National Women's Day

For public and ISASA 4-term schools.

Before Term 1

- ☐ Buy stationery and check uniforms
- ☐ Put the school calendar into the family calendar
- ☐ Talk with your child about their goals for the year

Before each term

- ☐ Check test and examination dates
- ☐ Book medical and dental visits for the holidays
- ☐ Plan family travel for school holidays
- ☐ Confirm transport and aftercare

End of each term

- ☐ Read the report together
- ☐ Agree one or two goals for next term
- ☐ Celebrate effort and progress

Tips from school leaders

1. Book family holidays in the official school holidays.
2. Avoid time off school around tests and examinations.
3. Use the breaks for reading and a little revision.
4. Plan sport and other activities a term ahead.
5. Keep one family calendar that follows the school's dates.

Please check dates with your school. Schools may add their own days, such as sports days, Saturdays or staff development days, and calendars can change.