

## Calendar: **Autumn**

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**September**

Bigger Purchasing Decisions Made

**8 September**  
International Literacy Day

**21 September**  
UN International Day  
of Peace

**7 October**  
The National Education Show

# Selling to Schools in the **Autumn Term**

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# **Selling to Schools in the Autumn Term**

Sadly, the summer holidays will be over before we know it!

Summer offers little downtime for those edu-marketers across the country who want to make their next big campaign stand out among busy September inboxes.

September is the biggest month in the entire school calendar for selling to schools. As part of our biggest schools survey ever, educators told us they make their big purchasing decisions in September.

So, are you ready to start this September with a standout strategy set to make this academic year your most successful yet?

Keep reading for everything you need to know about selling to schools in the autumn term.

## **Key dates to consider during the autumn term**

The autumn term ushers in the start of the new academic year, incorporating September, October, November, and December.

The term is punctuated by the autumn half term, in October, and the Christmas holidays mark the end of the autumn term and tend to start around a week before Christmas Day.

### **September**

The autumn term is an incredibly busy period for schools as all pupils and students begin a new year of learning in a new year group. For some pupils, the new school year also means a brand-new school.

Everyone involved in education will have new names and faces to learn, and new relationships to build.

Primary School teachers will be welcoming and settling brand-new pupils in. They'll also start the year by running the new Reception Baseline Assessments (RBA) – a one-to-one exercise done in 20 minutes with a teacher in an informal setting, and taken by all children in their first six weeks of Primary School.

Introduced in 2020, the assessment replaces KS1 SATs, which the DfE has recently confirmed will end from the 2023-2024 academic year.

Harvest Festivals also take place in Primary Schools in September and October. Pupils are often encouraged to donate food to worthy causes.

Many older students will be studying subjects for the very first time. At the end of KS3, students are asked to make their GCSE choices that they wish to study in KS4. College students will also be starting their A-Level courses and deciding if they've made the right choices.

Parents' evenings also usually take place in October. Schools must hold at least one parents' evening a year, with most schools holding two. The first in autumn allows parents to meet their child's teacher and learn how their child is settling into their class.

## **Autumn half term**

For schools in England and Wales, the autumn half term tends to fall on the final week of October.

Schools in Scotland usually have half term a week earlier than schools in England. Dates can vary because school employers are required to set the term dates of their school year.

Therefore, the local authority set term dates for their schools. Academies, foundation schools, and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting term dates for themselves.

## **The run-up to Christmas**

Time quickly slips by in November as schools begin to prepare for the Christmas holidays.

Both Primary and Secondary Schools will be planning Christmas fetes, concerts, nativities, and carol services before breaking up for the holidays.

There's plenty to keep track of in the education calendar between September and December, so here's a small selection of the dates that many schools will be aware of this autumn term:

## **International Literacy Day**

**8 September**

International Literacy Day is an annual awareness day which marks the importance of literacy to all countries and cultures.

## **UN International Day of Peace**

**21 September**

The International Day of Peace, also officially known as World Peace Day, is a United Nations-sanctioned holiday observed annually.

## **Black History Month**

**1 – 31 October**

Black History Month takes place in October every year in the UK and is an annual commemoration of the history, achievements and contributions of Black people.

## **The National Education Show**

**7 October**

The National Education Show is the leading education event in Wales, providing opportunities and new ways to improve and raise standards and enhance learning.

## **Women's Rugby World Cup**

**8 October – 12 November**

The revised fixture list for the 2021 tournament in New Zealand has been carried over to 2022.

## **World Mental Health Day**

**10 October**

The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day every year as an international day for global mental health education and awareness and advocacy against social stigma.

## **Remembrance Day**

**11 November**

Remembrance Day is a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty.

## **FIFA Men's Football World Cup**

**21 November – 18 December**

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar begins on 21 November as 32 teams aim to reach the final and become world champions on 18 December.

***Want to access  
our full education  
calendar?***

*Speak to us about Campus. Our Education Insights Calendar, available only to Campus users, is the most detailed education calendar available to sellers for schools, including events, deadlines, exams, awareness days, holidays, and much more. It will take the guessing out of your marketing to schools forever!*

# The shape of school budgets during the autumn term

Maintained schools run their budgets in line with the financial year, between April and March. In contrast, Academies run them in line with the school year, from September to August.

Maintained schools will begin forecasting for the new financial year between January and March while reviewing their current budget to identify any areas for improvement or any underspending.

Academies will begin planning for their new budgets in the summer term to make big purchases in September.

By the time September begins, it's likely all schools will have any major spending decisions in mind for the year ahead, and they'll all now have access to their new budget to put those plans into place.

In addition to their core budget, you should also be aware of other key sources of income including:

## The Sports Premium initiative

On June 25, 2022, the DfE confirmed that PE and Sport Premium funding will be maintained for the academic year 2022-23. The funding is a ring-fenced grant for English Primary Schools to improve the quality of PE, sport, and physical activity.

£320 million will be delivered to schools, with the average school receiving £18,000 for the academic year.

The Sports Premium is released in two allocations per year, with one usually falling in April or May, depending on the type of establishment.

Schools must follow guidelines with their purchases, and publicly report how they've used the funding. But this funding stream provides a wealth of opportunities for any business offering products and services relating to sports, physical health, swimming, clubs, and more.

## Pupil Premium

Similarly to Sports Premium, Pupil Premium provides schools with extra funding on top of their standard budgets. The Pupil Premium provides schools with the funds to provide extra support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2022-2023, this breaks down into £320 per service child, £1385 for primary and £985 for secondary per year, per child eligible for free school meals, and £2410 who are looked after by the local authority.

Pupil Premium is paid to the local authority in four quarterly instalments, with an allocation delivered in September.

As per the Sports Premium, schools must follow certain rules and document their spending to ensure it's being used to support eligible pupils in the best possible way. This can include providing targeted support or professional development for staff or tackling non-academic barriers to success in school, such as attendance, behaviour, and social and emotional issues.

*In 2022-2023, this breaks down into £320 per service child, £1385 for primary and £985 for secondary per year, per child eligible for free school meals, and £2410 who are looked after by the local authority.*



## Autumn spending habits

While all this information is useful, we needed to go straight to the teachers and school staff making the spending decisions to really understand their spending habits.

We conducted our most in-depth education survey ever at the end of 2021, capturing insights from over 3,210 teachers and school staff to ask some key questions about school spending decisions.

We asked the question, “When are the “bigger” purchasing decisions generally agreed upon within your establishment?”.

The response was conclusive:

**September is the #1 ranked month of the academic year when schools make their bigger purchasing decisions.**

17.7% of schools make their large purchasing decisions right at the start of the new school year in September. Following closely behind are the summer months, barring the summer holidays in August. June received 15.5% of the responses and July received 14.7% of responses.

These results challenge the idea that schools will be winding down ahead of the summer holidays in July, and more likely to put big purchasing decisions

off until September. Looking at these results, it's worthwhile continuing with marketing activity right up until the summer holidays.

While September came out on top, it's worth noting that November came in 10th place with 4.4% survey respondents saying they make big purchasing decisions during the month, and December came last with 3.3%.

Therefore, September offers huge opportunities for sellers to schools. However, the window of opportunity is relatively small compared to the summer term.

Our survey also discovered that **September is the #2 ranked month of the academic year when schools plan/make decisions on new contracts, annual subscriptions, and cyclical purchases.**

April received 12.1% of responses to this question and September received 9.6%.

The answers are roughly what we would have expected as April marks the start of the financial year and September the start of the academic year.

Both these survey answers reinforce what most education businesses likely already know – April and September are the key points of the year to be planning your edu-marketing strategy around.



# What does this all mean for your selling-to-schools strategy for the autumn term?

## Plan ahead

The autumn term may not officially begin until the first week of September, but it's no secret that teachers will spend many hours throughout the summer holidays planning and preparing for the return to school.

If you want to capitalise on the September rush, leaving your first marketing email to the first week of September might be too late.

You must start building awareness early, particularly if your product or service is a big purchase.

Senior leaders will likely need time to secure buy-in from the whole senior leadership team, and possibly the board.

Ideally, you'll have started your email strategy in the summer term to build connections, lay the foundations of your offer, and start encouraging schools to consider working with you. By September - when you drop them a quick reminder email - they'll already know what you offer, they'll trust your brand, and they'll be ready to commit.

If you begin a strategy in September, you'll be battling to be seen in busy inboxes. If a teacher has never heard of you before, they might leave your email unopened in favour of an email from a business that has been contacting them consistently for many months.

If you didn't begin in the summer term though, don't despair! You may not instantly win sales in September, but start building a consistent and trustworthy presence in teacher inboxes and you'll be converting leads in no time.



## **Avoid the summer holidays**

When we say plan ahead, however, we don't mean bombarding staff throughout the summer holidays.

Staff will be having some much-needed downtime. While they may be in school for the odd day here and there to supervise ongoing projects, they aren't likely to be holding full-scale meetings to discuss your offer. Do them a favour and keep their inbox clear, and you'll be much more favourable when you do email them.

By the very end of the holidays - we're talking a few days before schools re-open - most teachers will be gearing up for the return to the classroom and engaging once again with marketing emails. Plus, they won't be restricted by face-to-face classroom time, so they may find it easier to fit in a quick webinar or a meeting over Zoom to discuss your offer.

These few days are a golden opportunity for delivering a high-impact email offering something really useful for a teacher audience. Particularly if they can use it immediately in the classroom. Think free resources, quick guides, or information that will get teachers clicking your call-to-action.

If you're further down the sales funnel and you've laid those foundations in the summer term, they may be more open to taking up your offer of a demo or discovery call during this period.

## **Pull out all the stops in September**

As mentioned, September calendars and inboxes will be fit to burst. To make your emails stand out, you'll need to pull out all the stops in those first few weeks of September with impactful, eye-popping emails.

Make sure you know the strategies to help your email land in their inbox at the right time, stand out amongst their other emails, and stay at the front of teachers' minds long after they've closed your email.

While we recommend keeping yourself visible in teachers' inboxes by delivering a multi-phase email strategy to make teachers aware of your product or service, remember that teachers are busy too.

Build a consistent presence, but don't overwhelm your audience with intrusive sales messages. Offer them value early in your strategy, such as free resources and advice, and save the direct sales messages for those who engage with your outreach emails or throw in a discount code closer to the end of term to help sweeten a deal.

There we have it. Our top tips for a successful September.



## Need more?

If you're not sure where to start and would like some advice, drop us a line.

We can manage every aspect of your next strategy with our managed strategies plan, share our secrets about combining email and social media to great effect, and let you know all about how we've revolutionised edu-marketing with Campus – our complete selling-to-schools solution.

Get in touch at [info@sprint-education.co.uk](mailto:info@sprint-education.co.uk) or 01684 297373.



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