



SCHOOL CALENDAR DEVELOPMENT

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the first day of school determined?

The first day of school is determined primarily by the way the days fall on the calendar for the year. To see this, look at where Christmas falls on the calendar, consider the usual Christmas break, then move backward in the calendar about 90 days excluding holidays. That is when school will start. Generally, the more instructional days that can be scheduled in December, the later school can start in the fall.

One other factor impacting the first day of school is the desire for the first week of school to be 2-3 days long. Starting school with a full week of classes is especially difficult for young students. Planning a short week gives a reasonable transition period for students and teachers followed by a most welcome weekend. We try to schedule this short week, but sometimes it simply won't fit.

Why does Christian Academy attempt to schedule 180 days for students?

The Christian Academy calendar is designed around best practices in education. Several years ago we researched school calendar designs for states with high-performing schools and high-performing private schools. We determined that 180 instructional days was the benchmark for an effective school year.

Based on this information, it has been our goal to schedule 180 instructional days for at least the last 20 years. The state of Indiana already requires 180 instructional days, which falls in line with this best practice.

For Kentucky, we adjust a day or two when the calendar is tight, reducing scheduled days to 178 or even 177. However, we will return to 180 instructional days when we can make it fit reasonably into the calendar.

Generally, states set their requirements for school calendars based on funding proposals, not best practices. Kentucky's current standard, which is 1,062 hours of instruction delivered in no fewer than 170 days, defines the *minimum* schools must do to receive funding. It is not a reflection of a best practice in education. Therefore, changes in the Kentucky minimum requirement are unlikely to impact the Christian Academy Kentucky calendar.

Why are there days during the school year where students are not in school?

At all Christian Academy K-12 schools, teachers are contracted and paid for 190 days of work. Of those days, 180 are designated student days (two of which are scheduled as Remote Learning Days - see question below) and the remaining 10 days are reserved for other necessary teacher activities throughout the year.

- Four days are used for teacher preparation for the beginning of school.
- One day is used for teachers to close out school.
- One day is used for teachers to prepare for the second semester of school
- Four days are used for professional development of teachers.



Why are professional development (PD) days scheduled during the school year?

Christian Academy's mission is to "Develop student's with a heart for God who grow as Jesus did in wisdom, stature and in favor with God and men". To ensure that happens, days are scheduled during the school year for teachers to grow professionally. Most importantly, teachers work collaboratively to build lessons that integrate biblical principles in all content areas. This biblical integration is the Christian school distinctive. Teachers also work to develop curriculum and instructional materials that best meet the needs of students. We value these days and make them beneficial for teachers and students.

Why does Christian Academy schedule Remote Learning Days?

Remote Learning Days are scheduled in the fall and in the winter once recent testing data is available for review. These days serve the following two purposes:

- 1) They provide an opportunity for teachers to analyze test data (ie: MAP, ACT, AP) and align instruction to meet the specific needs of each student.
- 2) They ensure that students and teachers continue to retain the skills necessary for effective online learning from home. Teachers will provide independent learning activities for students via Google Classroom or Canvas.

Why is the Kentucky schools' fall break scheduled over two weeks?

The Kentucky fall break is planned around system-wide teacher training sessions. Kentucky schools take an extra day or two to make the fall break. To hold the system PD days followed by days off, plus give families the benefit of a long weekend, the break must impact two separate weeks.

How are Christmas and spring breaks scheduled?

We schedule the Christmas and spring breaks around the local public school system calendars so families and students can take advantage of the programs offered by their churches and the community. In Kentucky, we schedule with Jefferson County Public Schools and in Indiana, we schedule with New Albany/Floyd County and Greater Clark County Public Schools.

What is a recess day?

A recess day is simply a day off if we don't need it as a make-up day. (Usually in May)

What factors impact the end of the school year?

The end of the school year is kept close to that of the local school systems since our students are active in organizations that plan around the public school calendar. It is our intention to schedule the end of the school year in May, if possible. Local church summer programs for students begin the first of June. Also, college summer programs for students and teachers begin then as well.

If you have additional questions, please send them to jdepugh@caschools.us.