



## SCHOOL CALENDAR DEVELOPMENT

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **How is the first day of school determined?**

The first day of school is determined primarily by how 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 weekends and 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.

Another 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.

#### **How does Christian Academy determine the number of school days to schedule for students?**

The Christian Academy calendar is designed around best education practices. Several years ago, we researched school calendar designs for states with high-performing public and private schools. It was evident that 180 instructional days were the benchmark for an effective school year. Based on this information, our goal over the last 20 years has been to schedule approximately 180 instructional days. On average, we schedule 177-179 student days for the school year, depending on how the calendar falls each year.

The state of Indiana recommends 180 instructional days, which aligns with this best practice. Kentucky's current standard, 1,062 hours of instruction delivered in no fewer than 170 days, defines the *minimum* schools must do to receive funding. It does not reflect a best practice in education.

#### **Why are there days during the school year when students are not in school?**

At Christian Academy K-12 schools, teachers are contracted and paid for ten work days for other necessary teacher activities throughout the year, in addition to student days. Two student days are also scheduled as Remote Learning Days (see question below).

- 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 the 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.



### **How are professional development (PD) days determined?**

The days scheduled off in the fall (October and/or November) and spring (February) for teacher professional development (PD) are determined based on the PD needs for that year. Some PD projects are best presented in blocks of time, perhaps two consecutive days. Others are best scheduled with a day of training followed by weeks in the classroom and an additional day of follow-up training. Additionally, dates may be scheduled according to the availability of a speaker. These dates are reviewed every year. While we try to arrange them so families can have extended time together, the purpose and focus of scheduling these days is teacher training.

### **Why does Christian Academy schedule Remote Learning Days?**

Remote Learning Days are scheduled in the fall and 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 students with independent learning activities via Google Classroom or Canvas.

### **How are Christmas and spring breaks scheduled?**

We schedule Christmas and spring breaks around the local public school system calendars, allowing families and students to 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. Because spring breaks are different in each state, CAI and CAL typically do not have the same week for spring break.

### **Why doesn't the Christian Academy fall break align with local public school fall breaks?**

The fall breaks in this region are not as consistent as spring and Christmas breaks, with most public schools in Indiana and Kentucky scheduling their breaks throughout October. When scheduling the Christian Academy fall break, we must consider the schedules of the CAI and CAL campuses, as well as the school system's needs, such as Professional Development and Academics. There will be years when our Fall Break will align with local school districts, but school system priorities will take precedence.

### **What is a recess day?**

A recess day is 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?**

We intend to schedule the end of the school year in May, if possible. Local church summer programs for students begin the first of June. Additionally, college summer programs for students and teachers also begin then. Depending on how the calendar falls, sometimes school can end before Memorial Day, but sometimes, we have to schedule the last day of school after Memorial Day to meet instructional requirements. Over the past twenty years, we have ended school before Memorial Day as often as we have ended school after Memorial Day, due to the cyclical nature of the calendar.

*If you have additional questions, please send them to [jdepugh@caschools.us](mailto:jdepugh@caschools.us).*