

# **FELL CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

## **STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

Approved July 17, 2023 by the Board of Trustees of the  
Fell Charter Elementary School

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*This Fell Charter Elementary School Handbook has been thoughtfully prepared by and reviewed by the Faculty, Staff, Administration, and School Board of this school.*

*It is our intent to provide all families with general information regarding our policies, procedures and practices to better inform you about your child's (ren's) planned, safe, learning environment.*

*If after reading this Handbook you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Mary Jo Walsh, Principal at 570-282-5199., [MJWalsh@fellcharter.com](mailto:MJWalsh@fellcharter.com).*

*We look forward to a wonderful productive educational experience with you and your child(ren).*

## **OUR MISSION:**

Fell Charter Elementary School is designed to provide an outstanding educational opportunity for all students, parents/guardians, educators, and community followers by offering a classical, character-based education supported by the latest technology. We provide proven, research-based learning opportunities such as creative hands-on experiences, individual, group and class projects, community service options and traditional "book knowledge." We use varied, research-based assessments to enable all students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills, regardless of their level of ability. We design for each student with a Personalized Student Success Plan (PSSP); a unique, individualized learning plan encouraging individual, intrinsic competition to excel. In addition, our Board of Trustees work with the community to empower all those who wish to participate in furthering the education of our students, to become part of our learning community.

## **BELIEF STATEMENT:**

We believe that each student and faculty member has a gift to offer to the world of education.

We believe that smaller class sizes and an overall smaller campus ensure personal attention to students as well as a safer learning environment for our school community.

We believe that we enhance the gifts of our students and teachers and create a research-based environment that is rich in innovation, creativity and a passion for learning.

We believe that parental/guardian support is crucial to the success attained in each child's performance. Therefore parents/guardians are welcome and expected to have an active role in their child's education.

## **VISION STATEMENT:**

FCS's comprehensive, world-class educational program has been designed to provide the global society of today and tomorrow with responsible, morally sound, well-educated citizens. (Jeffersonian Theory).

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### ***Visiting Our School:***

Parents/Guardians and visitors are welcome at our school. When visiting, for other than a scheduled conference, arrangements should be made in advance with the Principal. **Visitors should always report directly to the main office when entering our building.** Visitors must sign in, date and time of visit will be noted in sign in book and a Visitors Badge will be issued, to be worn at all times.

Conferences with teachers should be scheduled by appointment during the teachers prep periods, before, or immediately after school. Teachers are not allowed to leave their classrooms for “on the spot” meetings with parents/guardians unless it is an emergency and has been cleared with the Principal.

### ***Events Calendar:***

Our weekly school events and other information is distributed weekly, on Tuesday through email: the *Weekly Warrior*. You can also find all announcements and communications on the school website, [www.fellcharter.com](http://www.fellcharter.com). Fell Charter School makes every effort to be a “paperless” school. **We also use text alerts (Remind.com).**

### ***In Loco Parentis: (Full law not listed here)***

Assigned by Section 1317 of the PA School Code. “Every Principal, Assistant Principal and teacher in the public schools have the right to exercise the same authority as to conduct and behavior over the pupils attending the school, during the time they are in attendance, including time required in going to and from their homes, as parents, guardians, or persons in parental relation to such pupils may exercise over them.”

### ***Emergency School Closings:***

Should a school weather delay or closing become necessary, please use the school website, text alerts (Remind.com) and/or following TV stations: WYOU (22), WBRE (28), WNEP (16). **Rapid communication must be maintained, therefore please do not call the school; phone lines must be kept open for emergencies and transportation information.** In the event that we are not able to update the website (power failure) we will use TV stations and text alerts (Remind.com) only.

Please have a backup plan should inclement weather occur while students are already at school. Please be prepared and provide your child with an after-school/early dismissal plan.

Students should know this plan prior to the arrival of winter weather. **ALL students must know a phone number to reach a parent/guardian. All families must have on file with the school at least one emergency contact OTHER than a parent/guardian.** See also Emergency/Contact Forms section.

**In addition, students need to be picked up on time, so teachers may get home safely as well.**

***Email:***

All faculty and staff have access to our school email system; first initial of the first name, last [name@fellcharter.com](mailto:name@fellcharter.com). Parents/Guardians may email a teacher or staff member by using our website, [www.fellcharter.com](http://www.fellcharter.com). Some questions or comments may require a phone call, a copy to the Principal or other. Please remember that our site is monitored for protection.

***Notification of Nondiscrimination:***

FCS is an equal opportunity educational institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its activities, programs, or employment practices, as required by Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

For information regarding civil rights or grievances procedures contact the Principal, at FCS 570-282-5199.

***Child Abuse:***

Act 124 of the Child Protective Services Act mandates that all teachers and educational personnel report suspected cases of child abuse. Under Pennsylvania law, "...any child under the age of 18 years of age who exhibits evidence of serious physical or mental injury not explained by the current medical history...medical care". FCS abides by the content of the full law (not fully listed here).

Effective December 31, 2014, 23 Pa.C.S. subsection 6313 (Reporting Procedure), (a) Report by mandated reporter - (1) A mandated reporter shall immediately make an oral report of suspected child abuse to the department via the Statewide toll-free telephone number under section 6332 (relating to establishment of State-wide toll-free number or a written report using electronic technologies under section 6305 (relating to electronic reporting)).

23 Pa.C.S. subsection 6311 Subsection 6311. Persons required to report suspected child abuse. **\*\*\***(c) Staff Members of institutions, etc. - Whenever a person is required to report under subsection (b) in the capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility or agency, that person shall report immediately in accordance with section 6313 and shall immediately thereafter notify the person in charge of the institution, school, facility or agency or the designated agent of the person in charge. Upon notification, the person in charge or the designated agent, if any, shall facilitate the cooperation of the institution, school, facility or agency with the investigation of the report. Any intimidation, retaliation or obstruction in the investigation of the report is subject to the provisions of 18 Pa.C.S. subsection 4958 (relating to intimidation, retaliation, or obstruction in child abuse cases). This chapter does not require more than one report from any such institution, school, facility or agency.



***Hands On Policy: (Reasonable Force)***

The FCS School Board prohibits the use of corporal punishment by all school employees. Reasonable force/hands on may be used by teachers and school authorities to interrupt/quell a disturbance, obtain control/possession of a weapon or other dangerous object, self-defense or for the protection of other persons in the immediate danger area.

***Admissions Policy:***

FCS's School Board understand the importance of establishing fair and equitable criteria for student admission and shall fully comply with the PA Charter School Law regarding admissions policies and procedures, as well as any other applicable state or federal guidelines. FCS is non-sectarian in all respects, does not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Admissions criteria do not consider intellectual or athletic ability. Any child who under state law is eligible for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to FCS.

Students currently enrolled in the school will have the opportunity for re-enrollment during the month of January. Notifications will be emailed/posted home with specific dates for re-enrollment.

FCS will hold informational sessions for parents/guardians for students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8. This event will be publicized.

The dead line for pre-enrollment of Fell Charter students is April 1. Enrollment after this date does not guarantee a seat. Enrollment subsequent to April 1\* is on a space available basis. Waiting lists will be kept for each grade.

Enrollment preference is as follows:

1. Returning students (re-enrollment).
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students.
3. Students residing in the host school district (Carbondale Area).
4. Students residing outside of the host school district.

If the number of applications exceeds the number of enrollment seats, the school will go to the waiting list and determine admission based on the date of the placement on the waiting list. Parents/guardians have three days from the time they are notified that a seat is available to make a determination if their child will enroll at Fell Charter. On the fourth day the Principal will contact the next family on the list. Classes will not exceed 25 students per class, 20 in

Kindergarten, without prior Board approval. *Ratified by the Board of Trustees March 28, 2006*

**DATES:**

Re-enrollment	2-3 weeks in January
Deadline for re-enrollment	March 1 <sup>st</sup> or the first school day in March
Deadline for pre-enrollment	April 1 <sup>st</sup> or the first school day in April
Deadline for transfer in current year	March 1 <sup>st</sup> or the first school day in March*
Lottery, if necessary	Ten days after the deadline for pre-enroll.
Confirmation of enrollment	First week of May

\*Or Principal's discretion (approved spring 2009)

**Welcome**

This Handbook provides current policies and procedures of the FCS. This Handbook provides an overview of details, rules, regulations, practices and policy information that is necessary for the effective operation of our school. This Handbook is provided and it is expected that each parent/guardian will review this Handbook with his/her child(ren). It will be assumed that parents/guardians have read and are in agreement with this Handbook. The school assumes agreement with the Handbook unless a parent/guardian contacts the Principal.

FCS faculty and staff believe that parents/guardians are the first teachers of their child(ren) and that good attitudes toward school, as well as proper socially accepted behaviors are taught first in the home. FCS will continue those goals as we introduce your child(ren) to our rigorous curriculum, steeped in strong character development and high school/college prep course work. Socially accepted behaviors are expected.

Good self discipline is the expected norm for students entering FCS. Students should already have learned (and FCS will strengthen) to respect the rights of others and to take very seriously the educational opportunities offered by the FCS.

FCS faculty and staff believe that behavior is an on-going series of choices, therefore for students who have yet to fully develop effective self discipline and strength of character, this Handbook is designed as a tool for developing skills around; good citizenship, effective self control, appreciation of the need for rules and respect, as well as polices all in an effort to fully educate a strong-minded, ethical, global student/citizen.

Our belief is that behavior is a series of choices, therefore we offer below a few of the Pennsylvania School Code listings of student responsibilities:

- \* .....regular school attendance, conscientious effort in the classroom work and conformance to school rules and regulations ...{policies and procedures, FCS}
- \* .....share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living...
- \* .....ideas and opinions {should be expressed} in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others
- \* .....no student has the right to interfere with the education of his/her fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, staff and all others involved in the educational process.

With all of the above in mind, the FCS Handbook has been written and approved by our School Board with an emphasis of respect, responsibility, reasonableness and citizenship as the keystones to an effective delivery of the educational process.

#### **Emergency Contact/Permission Forms:**

It is imperative that FCS has a current, complete list of emergency contact information for your child(ren) at all times. If any information changes at any time, please contact our School Secretary. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep the school informed with accurate contact information. No student will be permitted to attend field trips or outside school-sponsored activities without an up-to-date Emergency Contact list that must include at least one adult contact other than a parent/guardian. For students left after school has dismissed over one hour and a parent cannot be reached, the Carbondale Police Department (or Office of Youth & Family Services) will be contacted.

#### **Student Records:**

A permanent record of your child's grades, biographical data, behavioral data, health records, and standardized test scores is maintained by the FCS. These records are considered confidential information and will NOT be released to any agency outside of FCS without your written permission or court order. Records are disposed of at student's age 21 (see full law, not printed here).

If you, as a parent/guardian, wish to examine your child's record at any time, you may do so by submitting a written or email request to the Principal. Arrangements will be made for you to meet with him/her to explain the contents of the individual file, within 48 hours.

For questions regarding access, collection, inspection, review, challenge, disclosure, maintenance and copying a child(ren)'s record, please consult the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). FERPA is a federal law which protects the confidentiality of students' educational records by limiting their dissemination/disclosure.

Additionally, the Health Insurance Privacy and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) governs all student health records in public schools.

#### **Homework:**

Homework is a meaningful and an integral part of the learning process at FCS, it is a continuation of what has been discussed/learned in class. Homework is an excellent way to reinforce what was accomplished in class and to offer you, as parents/guardians, an opportunity to see what is occurring in class. Homework is also an opportunity to identify areas that may require more explanation. Parental/Guardian support of homework is crucial. It is imperative that students do the homework with only assistance from an adult.

Homework will be assigned, graded and/or reviewed at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Homework experiences involve students, parents/guardians, through enrichment activities, reinforcing learned materials, stimulating independence, fostering responsibility, self-motivation, self-direction and furthering interests in topics. Each teacher will provide the students with his/her specific policies regarding homework.

Homework should be neat and must be presented in the class when it is due.

When students are absent, it is the responsibility of the student (or family members) to obtain the missed assignments. Upon return to school, it is the responsibility of the student to meet with the teacher(s) and request clarification of material covered.

### **Withdrawal/Release of Records:**

In the event you choose to transfer your child to another school system, you must first complete a Withdrawal Form which can be obtained in the main office. Only after we have received a signed Release of Records form, and a new school records request form, will your child's permanent records be forwarded to the new school system.

### **Attendance Policy/Information**

#### ***The School Day:***

School begins with all students reporting to school by **7:15 a.m.** for breakfast. Students will not be admitted to the building before 7:15 a.m. Opening exercises will be conducted and students will begin their day at 7:45 a.m. General announcements will be made once in the morning and once at the end of the day approximately 3:15 p.m. Dismissal starts at approximately 3:20 p.m.

#### ***Attendance:***

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors for a successful education. Attendance in class has a stronger impact on academic progress than any other factor. From an educational standpoint, the process of determining, grading, observing and evaluating a student's performance must include a review of such items as self-discipline, group interaction, and class participation which are not captured or reflected in paper-and-pencil tests. Accordingly, the FCS expects and requires that students maintain regular attendance in school. Attendance for virtual days students are present if they are in front of the camera at all times, engaged and materials or assignments are submitted, a working microphone for communication purposes is required.

Perfect Attendance recognition is given to each student who has been present every day, for a full day.

## **The Compulsory Attendance Law Brief Overview (full law not printed here)**

### ***Truancy:***

Pennsylvania law requires every child of compulsory school age to attend school. Compulsory school attendance age is that period of a child's life from the time the child's parents/guardians elect to have him/her enter school, which shall not be later than at the age of six (6) years.. Compulsory school attendance requirements may be met by attending the public schools, by engaging in one of the educational alternatives to public schools, attendance or by exercising one of the standard exemptions. Educational alternatives to public school attendance include enrollment in non-public schools, involvement in a tutoring program approved by the Home District Superintendent, participation in a home education program conducted by a parent under state mandated conditions.

Truancy has been defined as - leaving school during school hours without school authorization or absence from school other than those defined as legally excused. Truancy may be categorized as excused, unexcused/illegal absences. Unlawful absences of a child of compulsory school age without justifiable reason shall constitute an unexcused/illegal absence.

Attendance Staff are required to report to the Principal when a child of compulsory school age receives **three unexcused/illegal absences**. Upon verification of the illegal absences, an email or written notice is sent to the parents/guardians which must contain the dates of the absences, the statement that they were unexcused/illegal, that the absences represented a violation of compulsory attendance law, a warning that such violation represents a summary offense and carries a penalty, and that the school intends to proceed against the parent/guardian and child without notice if another unexcused/illegal absence occurs. Upon the next unexcused/illegal absence, the school may initiate a SAIP (Student Attendance Incentive Meeting) meeting, followed by a compulsory attendance violation proceedings, if necessary before the local district justice.

When a compulsory attendance violation proceeding is commenced by the school, both the parent/guardian and the child will be required to appear at a hearing before the district justice. Pennsylvania law may impose a fine on parents/guardians for truancy and may require parents/guardians to pay court costs or be sentenced to complete a parenting education program.

A district justice is permitted to suspend a sentence given to a parent/guardian or child if the child is no longer habitually truant.

After a first notice of an unexcused/illegal absence has been sent to the parent/guardian, no further notice shall be required in order for a school to prosecute future absences.

### ***Excuses For Absences:***

On the day that a student returns to school after an absence, he/she should submit to the teacher an emailed or written excuse signed by the parent/guardian. Failure to submit an

appropriate written excuse **within three (3) days** of the student's return to school will result in the **absence being considered unexcused**. The school Principal or designee may contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to verify parental/guardian knowledge of the student's absence, or if no excuse is received within the three days of return.

**The following information must be contained in the written excuse:** Full name of the student, grade of the student, date(s) of the absence, reason for the absence, signature of the parent/guardian, and contact number in case we need further details.

***In all cases, only three (3) parent (written/emailed) excuses are permitted for the entire school year.***

#### **Excused Absences:**

Excused absences shall include the following types of absences: Illness or recovery from an accident, quarantine, death of an immediate family member (parent/guardian, step parent, sibling, step sibling, grand parent, aunt or uncle), impassable roads and inclement weather. The last two reasons for an excused absence are determined solely by the school buses' (for FCS students; home district buses) inability to operate. In all medical cases of three days of absence a doctor's note is required to return to the classroom/school.

#### **Unexcused Absences:**

Unexcused absences shall consist of all absences not listed above as excused absences, or that no contact has been made by the parent(s)/guardian(s) with school staff.

#### **Communication Process:**

After accumulating three (3) unexcused absences, a notification letter will be emailed home to the parent/guardian. The authority to excuse student absences is vested solely in the Principal or his/her designee. Notifications will be emailed to parent(s)/guardian(s) re: at a 6<sup>th</sup> absence a SAIP meeting designed to discuss solutions for better attendance).

At the 8<sup>th</sup> day absent a student will then be on "doctor's excuse" for EACH subsequent absence, at the 10<sup>th</sup> day (sans doctor's excuse(s)), the school will file truancy charges.

The FCS School Board approves of the Principal or his/her designee to reserve the right to question any absence, note, or doctor's verification. Any absence is subject to a random check by the Principal or his/her designee.

#### **Tardiness:**

Punctuality is imperative for school classes to function well. A student is considered tardy when entering the school or virtual after 7:45 AM (times may vary for virtual school days). In the event of tardiness, the student **must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the main office or email to the school secretary on virtual days.**

Excessive tardiness also represents a violation of compulsory attendance law and may initiate compulsory attendance violation proceedings before the local district justice.

**Excused Tardiness:** Excused tardies constitute the following:

Illness or recovery from an accident, medical, dental or other health care appointments (which should be scheduled around school hours of operation). Excuses from the medical office must be provided to the school.

Court appearances; documentation should be provided to the school.

**Unexcused Tardiness:**

Unexcused Tardiness shall include anything not listed above.

**Excessive Absences:**

Any student who has unauthorized, irregular or otherwise unexcused/illegal absences from school in excess of 19 days may be subject to a loss of credit and may have to repeat the school year or attend summer school at FCS, or participate in a FCS credit recovery approved program. The Pennsylvania School Code will also be followed.

Students who are facing a loss of credit due to excessive absences may appeal to and appear before a review committee (comprised of 2 Board members, 2 faculty {not currently instructing the student}, the Principal, the School Counselor, the school nurse, a SAT member {not currently instructing the student} and the school solicitor (if the Principal deems appropriate) to show cause why the credits should be received, when the student has not met stated attendance requirements. A written request for the review by the committee must be submitted in writing three weeks before the end of the school year to the Principal. An appeal hearing will then be scheduled prior to the close of the school year.

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program (Full law not listed here)**

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq., McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youths face in enrolling, attending and succeeding in school.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, educational agencies must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youths. Homeless children and youths must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. Local Educational Agencies are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices or policies that may act as barrier to the identification, enrollment, attendance or success in school of homeless children and youths.

**Definition of Homeless** (McKinney-Vento Act sec. 725 (2); 42 U.S.C. 11435 (2)):

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence: “Doubled up”- sharing the housing of others due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reasons, Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations, living in emergency or transitional shelters, living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live, migratory children living in the previous circumstances, living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings. Unaccompanied Youth – children or youth who meet the definition of homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

### **Residency and Education Rights:**

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and homeless living situations have the following rights: Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment; access to free meals and textbooks, Title 1 and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation; attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situation.

When a student is identified as being McKinney-Vento eligible staff will: assist with enrollment, monitor school attendance and arrange transportation (preK-8 students), provide school supplies and other school related materials as needed; advocate for and support students and families through school and home visits; set clear expectations for student behavior, attendance and academic performance; assist students/families access with community services; assist students/families with access to tutoring, special education, and English language learner resources; assist students so they can participate in sports, field trips, and school activities regardless of their ability to pay or to provide their own transportation.

For additional information, contact the Principal, LEA Homeless Liaison at the school.

### **Home Bound Instruction:**

Available for students who are unable to attend school due to physical disabilities or are not able to attend based on an attending physicians provided script. State regulations indicate that a student must receive five hours of instruction (minimum) per week. Forms must be completed (available in the main office) and approved by the Principal before instruction may start.

### **Participating in After School Events (Co-curricular or Extra-curricular):**

Participation in after school events is a privilege for students.

Students will not be permitted to stay after school without an adult adviser, moderator or coach, approved by the Principal.

A student must be in school by 9:00 a.m. in order to be eligible to participate in any after school event, unless prior administrative approval has been granted in writing\*. Please note, students who

arrive after 7:45 a.m. – tardy

arrive after 9:00 a.m. – no after school participation\*

arrive after 11:00 a.m. – ½ day absent



arrive after 12:15 p.m. – full day absent

leave before 11:00 a.m. – full day absent

leave after 12:15 p.m. – ½ day absent

leave after 2:30 p.m. - no absence

Any Student with a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Discipline Referral (per quarter), or who has been placed on In-School Suspension, or has been placed on Out of School Suspension during the quarter, may have his/her privileges to attend any FCS sponsored event revoked. Attendance at any FCS event(s) is a privilege and may be revoked at the professional discretion of the Principal or his/her designee.

Any student who has accumulated 5 or more Discipline Referrals for the school year may be denied attendance at any event, including, but not limited to: field trips, dances, awards events, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities, including graduation (beginning 2009) at the professional discretion of the Principal.

In addition, any student or adult deemed a threat to him/herself or others or who is unwilling to accept the policies of FCS and who has referrals may be denied admission to any FCS event(s), at the professional discretion of the Principal, after consultation with building faculty, and outside resources if necessary.

#### **Parent/Guardian Request for Early Dismissal for a student:**

All notes for a student's early dismissal must be presented to the school Secretary in the main office by 8:15 a.m., on the day of the early dismissal. In order for a student to leave the school property before dismissal, he/she must have a note from his/her parent/guardian. The note must include the student's name, grade, date of the early dismissal, time of the early dismissal, reason for the early dismissal, a contact number in case the administration has a question prior to releasing the student.

**Due to liability issues, no phone calls will be accepted for early dismissals.**

#### **Student Success**

##### ***Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences:***

Conferences are scheduled on the school calendar. A mandatory meeting for all parents/guardians and teachers is scheduled in the fall and an "as needed" meeting is scheduled during the third quarter. In addition faculty are available for mutually agreeable, scheduled meetings at a parent's/guardian's request at any time during the school year.

##### ***Personalized Student Success Plans (PSSP):***

PSSP's are developed collaboratively by each teacher with the parent/guardian (and student when appropriate), for each student. These plans customize the learning for the FCS student. Each plan addresses the particular strengths and areas in need of growth. Plans are updated every ten weeks (more often if needed).

***Progress Reports;*** Parents/Guardians receive reports at the half way point of the quarter and at the end of each quarter. More frequently if requested or at the discretion of the teacher(s).

**Student Assistance Team Tier 1 and 2:**

The SAT may be comprised of various grade level teachers, a Curriculum Specialist, Special Education Teacher, related service specialist (when appropriate) and the Principal (other professionals and/or parents/guardians are invited as needed). The purpose of this pro-active team is to address goals to maximize the individual student’s successes in the classroom, while at the same time offering techniques to be used in the classroom to reach a student who may be in need of additional attention at this time. This team also serves as a screening process for students who may/may not be in need of special education services or other related/necessary services.

**Student Assistance Program:**

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a state mandated program encompassing prevention, intervention, and monitoring. The prevention aspect may help students learn to deal with life stressors that affect school performance. The intervention aspect may reach students who may be “At Risk” as identified by observable behaviors that may include but are not limited to academic difficulty, absenteeism, lack of coping skills, inappropriate behavior, alcohol and other drugs, and/or violations of school policy. The Student Assistance Team is composed of specially trained professional staff members. For further information regarding the Student Assistance Program and services, please contact the building principal or School Counselor.

**Request for additional testing:**

On occasion it may become necessary for a teacher, Student Assistance Team, parent/guardian or other educational professional to request additional testing, provided by a specialist. No additional/or specialized testing will be done without parents/guardians written permission on a designated form provided from the school. Our purpose in testing is to gather additional data to more completely understand the needs of your child for better educational placement, decision-making and/or planning. Testing will be conducted by appropriate professionals.

**Report Cards:**

Are distributed four times during the school year, at the end of each quarter. Final report cards are emailed home on or after the last day of school.

**Grading Scale**

100- 97	A
96.9-94	A- (minus)
93.9-89	B +
88.9-85	B
84.9-80	B- (minus)
79.9-76	C+ (plus)
75.9-73	C

72.9-70            D  
69-below          Failure

***Honor Roll:***

Principal's Honor: quarter overall average of 94% or higher in all areas, ***including all specials*** and no grades of C or less.

Honors: quarter overall average of 89% or higher in all areas, ***including all specials*** and no grades of C or less.

Any grades of C or lower in any quarter will automatically remove a student from Honor Roll status. Therefore no recognition will be given for highest overall average or highest grade in a content area(s) with a grade of C or lower, not matter what the average.

Final overall average is from all 4 quarters averaged together, for all subjects. Highest overall average requires that a student attend all four (4) quarters.

Students will be eligible for honor status based on their first full quarter with us.

**Grade Level Placement, Promotion and Retention Policy:**

***Purpose:***

The School Board recognizes the unique developmental needs of each student. Therefore each student will be placed in an educational setting most appropriate to his/her needs and abilities. A Personalized Student Success Plan (PSSP) will be designed to support academic growth. The school has established and maintains high standards for each grade level, sets clear expectations, monitors student achievement and communicates student achievement to parents/guardians in a continuous, frequent and systematic manner.

***Placement Policy Statement:***

Newly enrolled students are required to take a standards-based or curriculum-based, assessment to determine the student's most appropriate grade level assignment. Other measures such as previous school report cards and teacher recommendations will be taken into consideration. The Principal will make the final grade placement determination.

***Promotion and Retention Policy Statement:***

No student shall be promoted to the next successive grade level based on age, or other social reason, unrelated to academic performance. To be promoted, a student must meet or exceed established standards (80% demonstration of mastery of content as determined by traditional and research based/authentic assessments) in all major content areas. Students must also demonstrate a 90% attendance rate (grades 1 through 8).

Students who are placed or retained below chronological grade level may be required to participate in some or all of the following interventions:

- After School Tutorial
- Summer School, or ESY or an approved credit recovery program
- Supplemental Course Work
- Individualized Assistance through the Student Assistance Team

***Mastery of Content:***

Each student is responsible for mastery of 80% of the content of each subject area. The School Board has affirmed that tutoring will be offered in Reading and Math. Tutoring will be recommended and offered to students who are in danger of not meeting or exceeding the 80% mastery requirement in Reading and Math. Students may also elect to work after school in other content areas with teachers, on an as-needed basis.

***Responsibility:***

Decisions regarding a student's placement, promotion or retention will be determined on an individual basis with consideration given to the classroom teacher(s), parent/guardians, and other necessary school personnel recommendations. The Principal shall have the final responsibility of determining grade level placement, and promotion or retention of each student. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing at the end of the third quarter if their child is in danger of retention. A meeting will be set at a time that is convenient for all parties to discuss the student's achievement, attendance, effort, work habits, behavior and other factors related to learning.

***Guidelines:***

The school uses multiple measures of student academic performance as determinants of grade level placement, promotion and or retention.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of the Rehabilitation Act (not fully listed here)**

Students who are identified disabled under the IDEA of the Rehabilitation Act or a Section 504 will be promoted or retained in accordance with the IEP Team recommendations, as documented in the IEP.

***Testing:***

FCS uses various methods for testing student's knowledge levels. FCS utilizes the PSSA (PA System of School Assessment) and other research-based tests as needed. Testing is conducted by professionals.

Additional Information relating to the Special Education Department: *\*The FCS has developed policies, practices, and procedures in concurrence with the federal and state regulations and guidelines to ensure a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to all school-age children, including those with disabilities. Not all special ed laws are listed in full here.*

***Screening Process:***

When students experience academic difficulties in school, teams will meet to develop interventions to help students be successful in regular education. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) accomplishes/documents this work.

If a student continues to experience difficulties even with regular education interventions, the student may be referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation by the Team, which may include the student's parents/guardians.

**Evaluation Process:**

Parent/Guardian permission is necessary before any additional, formal evaluation can take place. The parent/guardian is notified in writing of the types of assessments that will be given and the proposed date(s) of the evaluation.

An evaluation team reviews all pertinent data and compiles a report (crafted by the School Psychologist) called an Evaluation Report (ER) which states whether a disability or disabilities exist and if the student is in need of special education. Parents/Guardians are members of the evaluation team and will be asked to provide relevant information.

The entire evaluation process must be completed within 60 calendar days from the date the FCS receives signed parent/guardian permission on the "Permission to Evaluate" form. A copy of the ER will be given to the parents/guardians and a verbal summary of the report will be communicated to them. If a student is found to be eligible for special education, the parents/guardians will be invited to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. Students eligible for special education must meet one or more of the criteria established by State Standards and regulations for the following categories:

Autism	Deaf-blindness	Deafness
Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Intellectual Disability
Multiple Disabilities	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment
Specific Learning Disability	Speech and Language Impairment	Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairment including blindness		

A re-evaluation is conducted at least every three years unless a student is disabled due to intellectual disabilities, in which case reevaluations are conducted every two years.

**Independent Educational Evaluations:** Fell Charter School complies with 34 C.F.R. 300.503 (full law not listed here). **What is an IEE?**

Federal law defines an IEE broadly as “an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the child in question.” 34 C.F.R. 300.503.

Thus an IEE is not limited to evaluating only a child's academic or cognitive skills, but may include the evaluation of any skill related to the child's educational needs.

Consideration of such outside information also ensures that a program is individualized and provide a check on the judgments made by school officials regarding the child." Community Consolidated Sc. Dist. No. 180, 27 IDELR 1004, 1005-06 (in part).

In some instances school districts may request IEEs when they lack the personnel or expertise to conduct a particular type of evaluation....districts may seek an IEE to assuage parental concerns about the fairness or accuracy of an evaluation. The IEE is at no charge to the parents/guardians (see full law for details).

Sec.300.503 IEE in part, see full section of complete details.

### **Individual Education Program Process:**

The IEP is developed by a team, which includes the parent(s)/guardians, the special education teacher, a school administrator, the regular education teacher(s) and sometimes the student. The IEP includes a description of the programs and services which may be necessary to assist an eligible student to better succeed in the classroom(s). Information that is contained in the ER is used to write the IEP.

The student's program is reviewed every year at an IEP meeting or more frequently at the request of an IEP team member, which includes the parent(s)/guardians.

The IEP team will write annual goals which can be measured and are designed to meet the needs of the student. The IEP team will determine special education services and programs. The annual goal(s) will be evaluated on a regular schedule and parents/guardians will be notified of progress of these goals in writing (Progress Monitoring).

Once the IEP has been developed, the parent/guardian will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). The NOREP details the educational program recommended by the FCS IEP team. A parent/guardian must approve the NOREP in writing before implementation of the student's first special education placement.

The location and level of placement are determined at the IEP meeting and are based upon the least restrictive environment where the student may successfully achieve his/her goals. The Least Restrictive Environment could include providing special education services and programs provided outside the general education classroom only when supports and services cannot be provided successfully within general education classroom.

FCS considers a full continuum of services when determining an appropriate program for every student with a disability.

### **Title 1 Reading & Math (law not fully listed here)**

### ***Parental Involvement Policy:***

The Board recognizes that parental involvement contributes to the achievement of academic standards by students participating in Title I program. The Board views the education of students as a cooperative effort among the school, parents/guardians and community.

In compliance with federal law, Fell Charter School and parents/guardians of students, participating in Title I programs shall jointly develop and agree upon a written parental involvement policy. When developing and implementing this policy, FCS shall ensure the policy describes how the school will:

Involve parents/guardians in the joint development of the school's overall Title I plan and the process of school review and improvement; Provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist participation, planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance; Develop activities that promote the schools' and parents'/guardians' capacity for strong parental involvement. \*Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with appropriate programs, as provided by law. \*Involve parents/guardians in an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the policy in improving the academic quality of schools served under Title I. \*Identify barriers to participation by parents/guardians who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority. \*Use findings of annual evaluations to design strategies for more effective parental involvement. \*Involve parents/guardians in the activities of schools served under Title I. \*The Board shall adopt and distribute the parental involvement policy, which shall be incorporated into the Charter School's Title I plan and shall be evaluated annually, with parental involvement. \*The Principal or designee shall ensure that the school's Title I parental involvement policy, plan and programs comply with the requirements of federal law.

The Principal and/or Title I staff shall provide to parents/guardians of students participating in Title I programs:

- \* Explanation of the reasons supporting their child's selection for the program.
- \* Set of objectives to be addressed.
- \* Description of the services to be provided.

The Principal or designee shall ensure that information and reports provided to parents/guardians are in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents/guardians can understand.

An annual meeting of parents/guardians of participating Title I students shall be held to explain the goals and purposes of the Title I program. Parents/Guardians shall be given the opportunity to participate in the design, development, operation and evaluation of the program. Parents/Guardians shall be encouraged to participate in planning activities, to offer suggestions, and to ask questions regarding policies and programs.

In addition to the required annual meeting, additional parent/guardian meetings shall be held at various times of the day and evening. At these meetings, parents/guardians shall be provided:

- Information about programs provided under Title I.

- Description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- Opportunities to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- Opportunities to submit parent/guardian comments about the program to the school level.
- If sufficient, Title I funding may be used to facilitate parent/guardian attendance at meetings through payment of transportation and child care costs.

Opportunities shall be provided for parents/guardians to meet with the classroom and Title I teachers to discuss their child's progress. \*Parents/Guardians may be given guidance as to how they can assist at home in the education of their child.

***School-Parental Compact:***

Each-school receiving Title I funds shall jointly develop with parents/guardians of students served in the program a School-Parental Compact outlining the manner in which parents/guardians, school staff and students share responsibility for approved student achievement in meeting academic standards. The compact shall:

- Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment, enabling students in the Title I program to meet the school's academic standards.
- Indicate the ways in which parents/guardians will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in the classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions related to their child's education and positive use of extracurricular time.
- Address the importance of parent-teacher communication on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum, parent-teacher conferences, frequent reports to parents/ guardians, and reasonable access to staff.
- {drawn from PSBA format of policies}

***Title 1 Parent Complaints (906.1):***

The Fell Charter School Board's intent is to provide a fair and impartial manner for seeking appropriate remedies to solve issues with parents of children within the Title I program. Any parent/guardian with children in the school's Title I program shall have the right to present a request, suggestion or complaint concerning Title I personnel or the Title I program. Anonymous complaints will not be addressed by the Board, but referred to the Principal for disposition. At the same time, the Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment.

Any misunderstandings regarding Title I services shall be resolved by informal, direct discussions among the interested parties, following the established organizational structure. Only when informal meetings fail to resolve the differences shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, or complaints directed to Title I teachers or Title I support staff shall be referred to the Principal, for consideration and action. If further action is warranted, based on the initial investigation, such action shall be in accordance with established guidelines.



***Matters Regarding Title I Teachers:***

First Level - A matter specifically directed toward a Title I teacher shall be addressed initially to the concerned employee, who shall discuss it with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within the employee's authority.

The teacher shall report the matter and the resolution to the Principal.

Second Level - If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the first level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the Principal.

Third Level - If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the Principal, a conference shall be scheduled with the Board Subcommittee Chairperson for Education Policy. The Principal will provide to the Chairperson a report that includes the specific nature of the complaint, a brief statement of relevant facts, the action requested, and the reasons why such action should, or should not, be taken.

Fourth Level - Should the matter not be resolved by the Board Subcommittee level, the Chairperson will provide a report to the full Board that includes the specific nature of the complaint, a brief statement of the relevant facts, the action requested, and the reasons why such actions should or should not be taken.

Final Level - The Board, after reviewing all material relative to the case, shall provide the complainant with its written decision through the Board Secretary.

***Matters Regarding the Title I Program:***

A request, suggestion, or complaint relating to a matter of the Title I program shall be addressed, initially, to the Principal and then brought to higher levels of authority as described above.

***Matters Regarding Student Progress/Well-Being:***

All matters regarding student progress/well-being shall first be brought to the attention of the student's teacher and/or School Counselor. If the matter is not resolved, a conference shall be scheduled with the Principal. Student matters should not progress beyond the Principal level.

***Complaint Procedure:***

Complaints alleging violations of law in the School's administration of programs shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure.

The complaint must be filed with the School as a written, signed statement that identifies:

Alleged violation.

Facts supporting the alleged violation.

Supporting documentation, such as information on discussions, correspondence or meetings with the School regarding the complaint.

Complaints shall be referred to the Principal, who will notify the Board. The Principal will conduct an independent investigation, which could include but not be limited to:

On-site visit to the building that is the subject of the complaint.

Opportunity to present evidence by all individuals and/or organizations involved.

Opportunity for each side to question parties of other side and witnesses.

When the investigation is completed, the Principal will prepare a report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The report will include:

Name of the individual or organization filing the complaint.

Nature of the complaint.

Summary of the investigation.

Recommended resolution.

Reasons for the recommended resolution.

The Principal will submit the report to the Board, who will determine whether further investigation is required and/or the School's final response.

All parties involved in the complaint will be notified of the resolution of the complaint by the Principal or designee. The Principal will ensure that the resolution of the complaint is implemented. The time period between receipt and resolution of a complaint will not exceed sixty (60) calendar days, unless circumstances require additional time.

Either party may appeal the final resolution to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Division of Federal Programs ~ Department of Education 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333.

### **School related issues/concerns/grievances:**

In order for FCS to address the needs of its students, it is imperative that lines of communication remain open. FCS staff cannot address issues unless we are made aware of the concerns **directly** from the person(s) involved. Therefore please use the following procedure to discuss issues with the FCS administration or staff:

- \*if it is an issue in the classroom, please conference first with the teacher(s).
- \*if it is an issue related to general, non-academic issues, please conference first with our School Counselor.
- \*if you are not satisfied with the outcome of these conferences, please speak directly with the Principal.
- \*if you are not satisfied with the final outcome, a written account of the issue must then be provided to the Principal. The Principal will then take the issue to the School Board, so that they may determine what next steps may be necessary (such as but not limited to: a hearing, etc.).

### **Expectations of Student Behavior and Responsibilities:**

**\*this area is not all inclusive and is to be used as a guide.**

**FCS Pride Rules:**

Put downs are prohibited.

Respect and trust toward one another.

Insist upon your personal best.

Discuss and listen actively.

Expect and give truth and honesty.

The FCS has established these **PRIDE** rules in an effort to provide and create an atmosphere throughout the school in which students feel safe and secure. Creating this atmosphere gives students the maximum opportunity to learn.

**Classroom Expected Conduct:**

- Come/be present to/in class knowing that the teacher(s) is excited to have you as part of the class
- Come/be present each class on time each day ready to work, learn and participate
- Ask for help when necessary/question appropriately
- Bring/have all necessary materials with you to each class
- Raise your hand to be acknowledged to actively participate in class
- Follow instructions; abide by the classroom rules, practices, and procedures
- Respect the rights and property of others
- Do not slander a fellow student, staff, faculty, or guest
- Do not infringe on the rights of other students to receive an education
- Follow socially accepted practices of engagement with others
- Accept responsibility as well as praise for your actions
- Complete all assignments as proscribed
- Follow all reasonable requests of faculty and staff
- Never confront a teacher in front of the class, calling that teacher's authority into question
- Do not infringe on a teacher's ability to teach the class
- Have an open mind, and a willingness to learn new ideas

**Plagiarism:**

FCS students are expected to generate and to turn in original work for class projects, test and/or assignments. A student who represents his/her work, ideas, concepts (in part or as a whole), who has copyright infringements or has taken work from another person (deceased or alive) is guilty of plagiarism. When citing works, using quotes or paraphrasing, students must use the accepted and discussed class style/format (teacher will provide). Questions regarding proper use of citation(s) should be asked of the assigning teacher prior to submitting the work.

If a teacher suspects that a student has plagiarized work he/she will meet with the student to discuss his/her concern, inform the Principal and schedule a meeting between the student, parent/guardian and Principal.

For work that has been plagiarized, in part or in whole, a grade of zero will be received for the entire assignment(s). Repeat offenses may move the student through more serious consequences, to be determined by the Principal in conjunction with the School Board. FCS staff and School Board believe that honesty and integrity are the hallmarks of a well-rounded education.

A student who has plagiarized work is not eligible for any honor role status for the quarter in which the infraction occurred.

**Effective discipline policy/practices beliefs:**

Effective discipline is a process that developed over time and with well-programmed education helps students develop self-control, good character, effective judgments, orderliness, efficiency of time and practices. Good discipline is simply good self-control. Additionally all students have rights. Among these is the right to the best education possible, in a safe, orderly and conducive, learning environment. FCS's School Board and administration will follow PA state regulations (Chapter 12; not fully listed here) with regard to suspensions and expulsions. Part of our discipline process is knowing when your rights are impacting on those around you. Students should remember that actions generally determine how those around you treat and respond to you. Your character is defined by your patterns of behavior, therefore maintaining a good character is paramount to being treated with respect and trust from those around you.

***Bullying:***

Pursuant to PA 08-160, (not fully listed here) the definition of "bullying" has been expanded to include "any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year."

***Three components to bullying:***

1. It happens more than once against any student.
2. The intent of the negative actions is to hurt physically, verbally or emotionally.
3. There is an imbalance in the level of power in the relationship between the bully and the victim.

***In general there are 3 different types of bullying:***

1. **Physical:** This tends to include, but is not limited to: hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, punching, tripping, taking personal belongings, and/or slamming into walls, lockers, etc.
2. **Verbal:** This can include, but is not limited to: taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, making threats, insulting, and harassing.

3. **Psychological or Relational:** This can include, but is not limited to: spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, intimidation, humiliation and gossip.

### **Some Strategies for Parents**

1. Because children are usually afraid to talk about bullying, look for symptoms. They may include: unexplained reluctance to go to school, fearfulness or unusual anxiety, sleep disturbances or nightmares, vague physical complaints (often on school days), belongings that are missing.
2. Ask leading/open-ended questions. Ask children to tell you about their day; who they eat lunch with, what they do at recess.... don't ask "yes" and "no" questions.
3. Listen and understand. Hear what's happening and how the child feels.
4. Believe the child.
5. Don't give bad advice. Don't tell the child to ignore the issues; to fight back and/or become a bully him/herself; or that it's just part of growing up.
6. Teach your child safety tips. Walk to and from school in a group; use the buddy system at school; avoid places where bullying is likely to happen.
7. Encourage your child to speak up. Teach the difference between "tattling" and "telling". Tattling is when you report something just to get someone in trouble. Telling is when you report that you or someone else is in danger.
8. Advocate for your child. Tell him/her that you will be reporting the bullying incidents to the school as it is wrong and has to be dealt with appropriately. Speak to teachers and the Principal.
9. Work on school safety. Work as a team with school personnel, administration, parents/guardians and students to effectively deal with bullying.

10. Work on home issues if necessary. Review behaviors in the home regarding modeling good behavior for anger management, conflict resolution, communication skills, and assertive vs. aggressive behavior.
  
11. Help your child improve his/her social skills. Help him/her improve his/her self-esteem; teach him/her conflict resolution, anger management and communication skills and, most importantly, help him/her become more assertive if appropriate.

### ***Bullying and the School***

#### ***Possible bullying affects the school by:***

1. Having a negative effect on the social environment
2. Creating an unhealthy atmosphere
3. Impacts the student's ability to learn

Teachers are the first line of defense for protecting children from bullying and working to address bullying in a timely, fair and serious manner.

#### ***Cyber-bullying (in the school setting &/or with school equipment)***

Cyber-bullying is harassing, humiliating, and/or threatening others by any electronic device. Although electronic devices are often used for healthy social communication, adolescents may be using electronic devices to deliver cruel/harmful messages and/or photographs. The harassment can also be sexual in nature. Cyber-bullying can include cruel jokes, malicious gossip, as well as embarrassing information. It can involve someone your child knows or a complete stranger. (This is not a complete list).

Consequences for bullying will be determined on a case by case basis, with input from all parties. The Principal will make the final decision for consequences.

Fell Charter School students are required to complete an Internet safety program (non-graded) in the beginning of the school year, in each homeroom class. The curriculum focuses on educating students about appropriate and inappropriate online behavior, including, but not limited to; interacting with other individuals on social networking websites or other electronic media and in chat rooms, bullying and cyber-bullying awareness and response. The program consists of an interactive presentation and will be completed prior to the end of the first quarter of the school year. Students enrolling after the first quarter are required to participate individually with a designated school or designee presenter. All students in grades 3 - 8 will sign a verification form indicating they have participated in the program. Students in grades K - 2 will not be required to sign but the designated presenter will list the names of those who complete the K - 2 instruction. (language components are borrowed from Erie City School District and adapted to Fell Charter School).

**Behavior Rewards/Acknowledgments:**

- Student of the Month – students who exhibit the PRIDE rules during the month.
- 200 Attendance Club – students earn Red ticket for achieving specific attendance goals
- Character Education Assembly – Each month, students who have received a red ticket are acknowledged before their peers during a school-wide assembly.
- Classroom rewards determined by the teacher(s).

Discipline Infractions: Infractions may include some or all of the following. This list should be perceived as fluid, as the environment grows and changes. Additional terms may be added at the discretion of the Principal.

- Activation of the fire alarm system: Students may be fined under the PA penal code of false activation of the system. All fines to be paid by the student &/or family.
- Destruction of any fire or safety equipment that is property of the school, or contracted providers. Costs for replacement will be charged to the family.
- \* Defiance: willful failure or refusal to follow given instructions/directions.
- \* Disrespect: willful failure or refusal to lessen the integrity, authority or public opinion of an individual.
- \* Physical Assault: purposely causing harm or injury to another. In addition to a school consequence(s), students involved in an assault may be subject to law enforcement consequences, and/or be responsible for the cost to repair any FCS damages.
- \* Inappropriate public displays of affectionate behavior: overt public displays between students or adults that may cause embarrassment, or negative reactions from others.
- \* Profanity, obscenity, inappropriate language: visual or verbal ideas, language or drawings, etc. that are deemed socially inappropriate. Or any of the above that interrupt the learning of individuals, or cause threats or embarrassment or harassment.
- \* Fraud: providing false information about an individual or situation.
- \* Weapons: intended or not, which may cause harm. (Look-a-like weapons may be subject to the same punishments.). In addition to school consequence(s), legal consequences may also be applied. Not all consequences are fully listed here.
- \* Theft: taking of property that belongs to others or other entities. In addition to school consequence(s), legal consequences may also be applied.
- \* Destruction of school property: behavior or actions that damages or destroys property of FCS. The full cost of replacement will be paid by the student/family.
- \* Drugs/Alcohol: any illegal/controlled substance (look-a-like substances may be subject to the same punishments.). These should not be on, near or around school property or persons. The FCS Board of Trustees follows the controlled substance schedules I through V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (not fully listed here).
- \* Possession: having on person or property.
- \* Apparent intoxication/drug use: if in the professional opinion of the Principal or his/her designee or the School Nurse a student appears to be under the influence (based on a preponderance of the evidence), the student may be sent home, after a call to a parent/guardian, or if necessary local law enforcement. Adults visiting the school may also be subject to removal.
- \* Special situation(s) regarding a student addict, a student who has been arrested for possession or convicted of possession: if difficult or harmful publicity is affecting a

student(s) or disrupting his/her ability to remain with his/her peer group at FCS, the Principal and the board will discuss the situation with the parents/guardians. If it is mutually concluded that the student would be better educated in another/alternative school setting, every effort will be made by the FCS to ensure the safety, effective learning environment and transition for our student(s).

\* An investigation by the school or law enforcement may be necessary in any situation.

### ***Immediate Classroom Behavior Consequences***

- \* All classroom teachers will follow all of the steps in his/her individual classroom plan to try to modify disruptive/inappropriate behaviors. This includes contact with the parent/guardian, then.
- \* All classroom teachers may refer a student to the Principal or School Counselor if disruptive behaviors continue/ become aggressive or impacts another student's opportunity (ies) to learn.
- \* Students who curse at or use vulgar language on a teacher/staff member will be immediately suspended from school for one day with a mandated parent/guardian meeting in order to return.

### **Subsequent Classroom/Other Behavior Consequences/Options:**

A. Student Conference with Principal and/or School Counselor: The Principal and/or School Counselor and student will discuss the behavior leading to the referral as well as choices the student could have made or will make if he/she is faced with a similar situation in the future. Parents/guardians may be notified. A conversation will also take place about effective strategies to eliminate such behaviors in the future, with the classroom teacher(s) or student(s).

B After-School Detention: After-School Detentions take place on one afternoon a week from 3:30-4:30pm. Parents/guardians will be informed at least 3 days prior to the detention so that they may make transportation arrangements. Fell Charter School does not provide transportation.

Students are limited to two consecutive detentions. Parents/guardians will be notified by written notice of referral of a third detention. A third consecutive detention is an automatic one day In-School Suspension (ISS).

C. In-School Suspension (ISS): For ISS, a student will be provided with school work from the classroom teacher(s) and be kept physically separated from his/her peers/class for the entire school day (7:45am–3:30pm), under the supervision of an adult.

ISS may also be given for minor infractions as minimal/accidental property destruction, physical aggression (verbal or physical), or other threatening behaviors.

Students are limited to two consecutive In-School Suspensions. A third ISS will result in a one day Out-of- School Suspension (OSS).

D. One day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS): This may be a student's last consequence before facing a possible 3-Day Suspension or possible Discipline Board Hearing. Parents/guardians will be notified and a mandated conference/re-entry meeting will be scheduled with the Principal, School Counselor, classroom teacher and parent/guardian, one



additional staff person and a School Board member may be added if necessary before a student may return to classes.

OSS – student may not attend school for a designated period of time.

E. 3 to 5 Day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)/Discipline Board Hearing: Students who receive a 3-Day OSS have exhausted all phases of the classroom and other consequence process. Students will be suspended from school for three days, for major issues that disrupt the learning environment of the student or others, impact the teaching ability of the instructor, detract from others opportunities to learn, cause harm to self or others, create a safety issue or destroy school property. In addition the Principal may use administrative discretion for other issues not listed here. Prior to returning to school, the student and his/her parents/guardians must meet with the Principal, School Counselor or Discipline Board to discuss further action. This Discipline Board will consist of the Principal, School Counselor, two classroom teachers (not currently teaching the suspended student) and one other full time staff member. The Discipline Board may recommend that the issue be brought to the School Board for further consideration(s).

If a parent/guardian refuses to attend a mandatory meeting to assure reentry to school for his/her child, OYFS (Office of Youth and Family Services) will be contacted for “educational neglect”.

### **Technology Suspensions:**

The following (but not limited to) may at the professional discretion of the Principal, (with supporting documentation) move a student before the Discipline Board or the School Board for additional/other consequences:

Threats to a FCS staff member or student, theft, extortion, arson, possession of weapons or simulated weapons/look-a-like, drugs or simulated/look-a-like, and/or tobacco, alcohol: major disturbances to teaching and learning.

Any student who brings onto or is in possession of any weapon (look-a-like/simulated) on any school property or a school-sponsored activity will receive expulsion for a period of no less than one year, or further at the recommendation of the Discipline Board or the Board of Trustees.

The severity of and circumstances surrounding an infraction as well as the disciplinary history of the student may necessitate deviation/acceleration of the consequence process. Immediate action by school officials and notification of law enforcement authorities may occur if warranted.

Establishing the level of an infraction and assigning appropriate consequences is at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Board of Trustees.

**Referral** – A written report given to the School Counselor & Principal or designee after a teacher or staff member has completed all of the steps in his/her classroom discipline plan. The classroom discipline plan will not be followed in the case of severe infractions. The teacher will make an immediate office referral. Bus referral: see Bus/Transportation Policies in this Handbook).

**Severe Infraction** – Includes but is not limited to verbal abuse of a teacher or staff member, foul language, fighting, harassment, disruption of the learning of another student, physical abuse, inappropriate gestures, statements with double/inappropriate meanings, or racial slurs. Local authorities may be contacted by the Principal or his/her designee.

**Expulsion** – Student will no longer be permitted to attend FCS, for an identified period of time. Students who have exhausted the discipline process at FCS may be moved before the School Board for possible expulsion from the school. Expulsion may take several forms, based on the situation. Parents/Guardians will be notified via email of a date and time for the hearing before the Board. Parents/Guardians will be issued email documentation stating the reason the student is going before the Board, what the official process is and how the parents/guardians may choose to be represented at the hearing. All information may be sent to the home address on file, via certified mail or the email address on file, at the time of the incident/infraction. The FCS solicitor will guide all expulsion hearings according to the laws of the PA Commonwealth. All addresses (home and email) will be based on current school information that has been provided by the parent/guardian.

## **School Policies**

### **Student Dress Code:**

FCS students will be required to follow the designated school dress code each day, either in person or virtual. This policy is designed to help us focus on our primary mission of education and to help promote an orderly, safe, and respectful learning environment for everyone. Adherence to this code is the responsibility of the students as well as the parents/guardians. Teachers and administrators share the enforcement of this code. FCS Principal, with the authority of the School Board reserves the right to interpret the code and make necessary adjustments. The Principal has final administrative discretion to settle disputes/questions.

Appropriate school dress code is applicable to the traditional classroom (classroom setting) live/virtual sessions, posting to the School's social media, use of School's technology or any school function.

Students should exhibit good taste, personal hygiene and personal pride through good grooming and dress habits. It is the policy of this school that all students are expected to be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed.

For the purposes of this dress code, the local law enforcement authority and officials define Gang Paraphernalia. The definition will be ever changing as the times and conditions identify new paraphernalia. The FCS Board will work closely with law enforcement officials to identify any new paraphernalia and will endeavor to keep the FCS a neutral campus. If the student is found wearing any attire or accessory that is currently identified to indicate gang membership, the parents/guardians will be contacted and asked that the child no longer wear the item in dispute, for the child's safety as well as the safety of the entire student body. The student may be asked to remove the gang-identified article of clothing or accessory during the school day.

***The following is the FCS student dress code, (male and female):***

Articles of non-compliance include any attire that materially or substantially disrupts any school operations and functions, infringes on the rights of others, creates a health, safety or other violation, is lewd or offensive, or draws too much focus to a student's anatomy or particular body part.

All clothing must be appropriately sized to the student.

**Tops:** Shirts should be long enough to be tucked in. No halter-tops, showing undershirts, tube tops, midriff shirts, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, low cut, or see-through clothing is permitted. No off-the-shoulder tops. No inappropriate logos or pictures. Cleavage is not to be visible on the female students. Shirts should fit properly.

**Bottoms:** All must be appropriately sized for width and hemmed to a safe length. Underwear should not be visible. Pant size should not hinder a student's ability to move about easily and safely. Pants must be securely fastened at the waist or with a belt. Shorts/skirts must be at least 1" above knee; both when standing or sitting. Short skirts/shorts with leggings (or such) underneath are not permitted. No yoga pants or pajama bottoms or tops. No biker shorts.

**Socks, Stockings, or Tights** must be worn with all types of shoes. No fishnet stockings are permitted.

**Footwear:** All footwear must remain fastened as designed, i.e. tied; Velcro fasteners. No open-toed shoes are permitted, this includes flip flops and bath shoes. Soles and heels are to be no more than (1) inch in height. Sneakers must be worn for gym classes. All shoes must have a back on them. No bedroom slippers. We highly recommend no Crocs (for safety purposes).

**Physical Education Day Allowable Dress Code:**

**Tops:** Sweatshirts or tee shirts (proper length and with sleeves) are acceptable.

**Bottoms:** All other options for bottoms, as described above, are acceptable. It is recommended that girls not wear a dress, jumper, or skirt on Physical Education Days.

**Footwear:** Athletic footwear is required for Physical Education Days, and must be appropriate for physical activity.

**Daily Dress Limitations:**

- No clothing that is lewd, vulgar, offensive, indecent, sexually suggestive, condoning violence, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, suicide or inappropriate language

- No body piercing is allowed other than the ears. Students who are enrolled at FCS and have body piercings (other than the ears) must remove the piercings each day before school.
- No dangling earrings (touching a collared shirt) may be worn and only one earring per ear, rods or other styles are not acceptable. Gauges are not permitted.
- No hats, bandanas or sweatbands may be worn inside the buildings (worn as outer ware is acceptable only)
- Non-prescription sunglasses may not be worn in the buildings
- Items that may be considered a weapon, including but not limited to studded jewelry, “hardware chains”, or wallet chains will not be permitted
- Tears or holes in clothing are not be permitted
- No see-through clothing is permitted
- Girls of appropriate age and development are to wear proper undergarments
- No distracting or unusual hair colors (natural colors only), hair styles, large hair accessories, excessive or distracting make-up
- Male hair styles are to be neatly kept and are to be no longer than the collar of a dress shirt. Hair in the front must not be covering the eyes.
- Items or articles of clothing which are considered by the school administration to be disruptive to the orderly school environment are not permitted
- Hoodies/hoods on any attire are to be worn as outer garments only and not to be worn in school
- Excessive perfume or cologne is not permitted
- No spandex, no yoga pants, biker shorts, no pajama bottoms or tops or bedroom slippers, Crocs (or similar) are not recommended for safety purposes.

The Principal has the discretion to change the dress code on special event days, and such days will be announced in advance.

When an administrator, teacher, or staff member observes a student wearing items that are in violation of the dress code, the student will be referred to the Principal’s office. Students may be offered appropriate clothing from the school, if some is available. If the clothing is determined to be inappropriate, the student will be given the opportunity to obtain other clothing through a phone call to parents/guardians. The student will not be permitted to attend classes until the proper attire is obtained. If the student refuses to call home for other attire, he/she will be sent home/suspended for the day, until proper clothing is worn.

***Level of Disciplinary Consequences:***

Any student found violating the dress code more than twice, will be subject to an IS suspension, a parent/guardian meeting and other consequences if the Principal deems necessary.

***Dress code applies to all FCS events:***

Special consideration will be given to students with special needs. An agreement will be reached between the FCS and the parents/guardians.

**Library Program:**

FCS uses the Lackawanna County Library System.

### **Use of Technology Agreement and Proper Use of Computer and Networks**

The use of computers and technology at FCS is designed to have a positive impact on curriculum and instruction for all students.

Technology will be used (but not limited to):

- within the curriculum to enhance student learning and achievement.
- to assist students in becoming competent in the use of technology, with increasing degrees of sophistication as they move from level to level.
- as a tool to enhance creativity, encourage engagement and the completion of quality products.
- to assess technology-based information relevant to curriculum topics.

### ***Use of the School's Internet/system provided resources:***

Student use of the School's Internet/technology is a privilege and is designed to enhance learning and provide access to educational resources beyond those that are available in any one school. In using the Internet or other on-line information resources, students agree to the following:

1. Student use of the Internet/school-provided technology/resources is a privilege.
2. Students are expected to limit their use for resource only/data collection of information, directly related to the content of courses being studied or other approved topics. This privilege may be revoked by the classroom teacher or administration at any time for abusive conduct or violations of the conditions of use set forth in this agreement.
3. The School Internet or school-provided email will not be used to obtain, view, download, or otherwise gain access to materials which the school, at its sole discretion, believes may be inappropriate.
4. The Internet or school-provided email will not be used for illegal activities, transmitting offensive materials such as hate mail, discriminating remarks, other antisocial behavior, or obtaining obscene or pornographic material. The assigned email address is for student use only.
5. Students will not intentionally seek information, obtain copies, and modify files, passwords or other data belonging to other users.
6. Students will use language appropriate for school situations at all times when interacting with others through the resources of the Internet/school-provided email/services.
7. Students will not introduce information, including software applications or documents, on any school computer system without first obtaining staff approval and copyright compliance. All apps (other add-ons) must be run through a virus program prior to use on any FCS computer system. Students will not change or in any way alter a network device, device or peripheral name, file or folder name or network zone.
8. Students will not connect any device to, or disconnect any device from a computer or peripheral device, or the school's local or wide area network.
9. Students will not copy software applications, folders, or files from within or between network zones or to personal apparatus(es) without first obtaining staff approval and copyright compliance. Copying of any of the above will only be for purpose of curriculum related projects.

10. Passwords will be assigned for each student and for the individual use by that student. Distribution or alteration of a password is prohibited.
11. Students may not use the Internet or other technology resources to plagiarize material (see policy on Plagiarism as well).
12. Students may not use FCS technology for any social media purposes.
13. The school's internet, as well as the school-provided student email is for student use only.
14. Altering, bypassing or reverse-engineering by school equipment or software is prohibited and may be subject to school consequences. Additionally this violation may be reportable to law enforcement.

### **Network Etiquette**

Be polite, do not become abusive in communications to others, use appropriate language, do not reveal personal information such as (but not limited to) home address, phone number, do no banking or business on our system, no illegal activity. Fell Charter School is not responsible for damage to users equipment, loss of data, service interruption or illegal consequences.

### **Breach of Technology/Technology Suspension**

Consequences: 1<sup>st</sup> offense, a written warning will be issued and a 3 day use of school technology suspension will be put in place; use from 7:15 to 3:30 use only. A 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: suspension of school-provided technology for the remained of the quarter. A 3<sup>rd</sup> offense is a suspension of school-issued technology for the remained of the school year.

### **Use of Textbooks/School Supplies:**

All supplies are loaned to a student for the duration of the school year and must be returned three days prior to the last day of school in clean and good order. Supplies should be kept covered, free of marks and/or destruction. Teachers will periodically examine supplies for their condition. If a student loses, ruins or destroys a supply, he/she/the family will be responsible for the cost of replacing the supply before report cards are given or promotion or graduation is granted. Supplies are the responsibility of the student who is assigned the supply, it is the student's responsibility to know where the supply(ies) is/are at all times.

### **Use of School phones and personal phones (pertains to all enrolled or visiting students):**

Recognizing that students are bringing their own devices to school, we must assure that proper controls and safety measures are in place. All students (enrolled or visiting) may not use the school phone without permission of the Principal or his/her designee. All calls will be made from the main office when/if permission is granted. Only emergency calls (determined by the Principal or his/her designee) will be made. It is our policy to allow students to bring their own electronic devices (e.d.) to school and to be placed in the class/homeroom basket/holding area for the day. The students shall be solely responsible for the safekeeping of any e.d. brought to school, the student shall assume the risk of loss, theft, damage or other injury to the e.d. if it not placed in the classroom basket/holding area at the start of school. It is recommended that each device have user names, password, etc. for protection. Students shall not use the audio recording function of any electronic device at school or at any school activity or function unless given express and specific permission in advance by the Principal (or his/her designees) and by

the individuals who voices or activities, are to be recorded (in the presence of Principal or his/her designee). The school reserves the right for staff to confiscate any e.d. that is brought to school or to a school function or activity that is used in violation of any of the rules or prohibitions contained in this policy, that is used or “out” or “on” in violation of any instructions or directives by any teacher, staff member, Principal or other person who is in charge of the function or activity. Any e.d. that is confiscated will only be returned to the parent or guardian. Under no circumstances shall the school be responsible at any time for any fees or charges that may be associated with any e.d. All fees, costs and charges, etc. remain the sole responsibility of the student and his/her family/guardian. Students who audio or video tape in a classroom without permission from the Principal may be brought before the Disciplinary Board for violation of rights of the teachers and/or other students.

Policies regarding technology may be revised to remain in compliance with laws. Activities that are illegal may be subject to the discretion of appropriate legal authority(ies).

### **Student/Family Obligations:**

Students/families will be held responsible for all financial obligations to the school. Students/families will be notified of outstanding financial obligations. Timely payment is required. All obligations must be paid in full three days prior to the last day of school, or report cards, promotion or graduation may not be granted. Bank Fees will be assessed for all returned checks in the amount of the bank fee.

### **Car Riders and Parking:**

Please follow the line of order of other vehicles at dismissal and arrival. Your patience and attention are very important safety measures at the end of the day and the beginning of the day. Help us to ensure everyone’s safety at school by following all directions. Do not pass vehicles in front of you, stopped at the curb or in the parking lot. Do not exit the vehicle during student drop off or student pick up Do not smoke/vape or any illegal or tobacco product in the parking lot while waiting for students. When arriving at the school during the day, please park behind the orange cones.

### **Bus Transportation Policy:**

Please review this policy frequently with your child(ren) throughout the school year.

Bus drivers are responsible for the proper conduct of pupils riding the bus at all times. When issues develop that, in the opinion of the driver, require corrective action, he/she will file a written report with the FCS Principal. Parents/Guardians may be notified of any report filed by the driver. Suspension of riding privileges are done by the Principal in consultation with the driver (when necessary).

Notes to the FCS requesting permission to transfer students from one bus to another to attend social functions, visit friends, etc. are not permitted without prior approval of the Principal and Bus Driver. Students from a district may not travel to and from school by another district’s transportation vehicle unless a written request has been approved by the Principal and Bus Driver.

To keep all of our children safe and have an efficient transportation system, each student is provided with busing privileges information and is asked to cooperate by obeying the established rules and regulations for safety and prompt travel of all students. Students who do not comply with these regulations may be denied continued bus transportation privileges. Transportation issues are the responsibility of the Principal, in conjunction with the home school district transportation manager.

At all times students must:

- \* Exercise good manners, caution and consideration of others.
- \* Obey the bus driver; the driver's first concern is for the student's safety.

Bus Stop Behavior

- Arrive at your bus stop five minutes ahead of time.
- Stand a safe distance from the curb or road.
- When the bus approaches, form a single line.
- Stay clear of the bus until it has come to a complete stop.
- Smaller children board the bus first.

- Boarding the Bus and Exiting the bus
- Be safe at all times. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before you approach/exit and board the bus. Use the handrail and steps in a safe manner.
- Be orderly. Quietly enter/exit the bus and fill the empty/exit seats from the front first toward the back, as directed by the driver. At times, the driver may determine that assigned seats must be used.
- Be cooperative. The bus driver is ultimately responsible for your safety and is in complete charge of the bus and it's passengers. It is expected that ALL students will be cooperative and courteous to the driver and fellow students at all times.
- When exiting the bus, exit in the front of the bus and go directly to your appointed destination.

On the Bus Behavior

- \* Be seated in a quiet manner. Students are to be seated whenever the bus is in motion.
- \* Be quiet. Normal conversation is permitted. Disturbing others, or the driver and yelling is not permitted.
- \* No consumption of food or any other products of any kind is permitted.
- \* Be good citizens by keeping the bus clean and do not litter.
- \* Be safe. Do not extend any extremities (arm, head, etc.) or personal items from the bus, tamper with any bus equipment or block isles. Do not destroy bus property.
- \* Do not use obscene language, call out to passers-by, play music or open windows.
- \* Be responsible. Do not disturb the driver or other students unless it is an emergency.
- \* Be on your best behavior. Fighting will not be tolerated, nor will any behavior which causes problems for another student or the driver.



- \* Be neat. Keep the aisle clear at all times. Throwing objects inside or out of the bus is not permitted.

Bus Discipline Policy A student will receive the following discipline for inappropriate behavior.

1. First offense – Warning (verbal or written).
2. Second offense – Written notice and meeting with parents. A one day suspension will be scheduled by the Principal or his/her designee.
3. Third offense – Three to five day suspension. Parents/Guardian's are responsible for transportation to and from school during the suspension for all 3<sup>rd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> suspensions.
4. Fourth offense – Suspension from bus riding privileges for the remainder of the quarter.
5. Fifth offense - Suspension from bus riding privilege for the remainder of the school year.

## **Lunch Room Policies**

### ***Lunch Room Rules, Behavior and Conduct:***

Follow the "PRIDE RULES". Good behavior is always expected at lunchtime. Students should respect others during this period by staying seated, talking quietly, and cleaning up after them self in a timely, orderly manner. Lunch period is a regularly scheduled class period: punctuality and proper behavior is expected.

### ***Nutritious Meals: (restrictions may apply)***

FCS provides a free breakfast and free lunch program consisting of nutritious meals prepared by our staff. Our menus meet standard nutritional requirements, set by the NSLP to insure your child has a healthy, balanced meal. Parents/Guardians may provide a bagged lunch or lunch boxes for their child. Please be sure to pack a healthy, nutritious lunch as well. Also, don't forget to include a proper beverage, (examples: juice, water). **Soda., power drinks or other caffeinated drinks are not allowed nor is anything in a glass bottle.**

In addition, the lunch staff will not microwave food for students. Exceptions will only be made via the Principal for students who are in medical need.

Due to student allergies, peanuts/nuts are not permitted. As we identify student allergies other items may be prohibited. Notifications regarding allergies will be sent home via newsletters each school year.

### ***Imported Fast Foods:***

No fast foods are permitted for breakfast, snacks or lunch (examples, but not limited to: Burger King, McDonald's, local restaurants).

### **Prohibited in School Items and Belongings:**

Students may not bring or possess any object that may distract from teaching and learning. Examples include, but are not limited to;

- A. Toys: Possession of any toys, games, electronic games, etc. without permission of the Teacher or Principal.
- B. Communication devices without permission of the Principal.

Violations will result in confiscation of the items by school staff. The item(s) must be picked up by a parent/guardian; they will not be returned to the student.

### **Student Search and Seizure:**

(List is not exhaustive) School racks, desks, textbooks, storage units, supplies and coat closets are the property of FCS. The use of such property by students is a privilege, not a right. The reasonable expectation of privacy which students enjoy does not extend to FCS property. FCS reserves the right to open and search any school property whenever deemed necessary or reasonable for the protection of health, welfare, and maintenance of discipline in the classroom/building or on school grounds. This may include random, blanket, periodic or sweeping searches and may include the use of animals or mechanical means in an effort to detect the presence of illegal substances, weapons, or other prohibited articles or materials. Random, periodic or sweeping searches of all property may be conducted without regard for any individual suspicion.

School authorities or law enforcement authorities may confiscate any illegal (or apparently illegal) material(s). Any materials confiscated may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings in the school or may be turned over to law enforcement authorities if necessary.

School officials will have reasonable suspicion to conduct searches. The Board authorizes the use of trained state police or local law enforcement dogs for searches.

Searches of students, student clothing, lunchboxes, and student possessions may be conducted if the administration determines that a reasonable level of suspicion exists that a violation of school policy has occurred. Students found in possession of illegal substances (or simulated/look-a-like), weapons, (or simulated/look-a-like) or other prohibited articles or materials in their property, desks, lunchboxes and/or on their persons shall be subject to discipline in accordance with the rules, policies, and regulations of the FCS and shall further be subject to any fines, penalties or legal actions as may be provided for by state and federal laws and regulations.

### **Lost and Found:**

A lost and found box will be maintained at FCS. All personal items may be claimed after proper identification. After a period of one month all unclaimed items will be destroyed or donated.

### **Health Policies, Procedures, and Requirements (*School Nurse Management Protocols for Health Problems:*)**

Protocols for health problems (detailed list) is available from the Principal, and the School Nurse. Protocols have been approved by a licensed physician.

### ***Immunizations:***

Students may not be admitted or permitted to attend FCS unless the student has received immunizations required by the Dept. of Health. Proof of immunization is required upon registering/entering school. A student who has not received required immunizations or who has not been exempt from immunizations, may not attend school. A child who needs the next or final dose of a multiple dose vaccine has a (one time) provisional period of five (5) days after the start of school. See PA Department of Health School Immunization Requirements.

All grades K-8 are required to have the following immunizations:

4 DPT, DT, or DtaP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus). The fourth must be on or after the fourth birthday.

Polio

2-MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)

3-Hepatitis

2-Varicella-Chicken Pox Vaccine or documentation of disease

7<sup>th</sup> grade students are additionally required to have the following:

1 meningococcal conjugate (MCV)

1 Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Acellular pertussis)

***Physical Examinations:***

Current medical examinations are required upon entry into school in Kindergarten/first grade, and sixth grade, and for newly enrolled students in any grade (including returning students). The required school medical examination should be conducted by the family physician and reported to the School Nurse or by submitting the physician's exam report forms supplied by the school. Faxes are accepted (570-282-0930) from Physician's office.

***Dental Examinations:***

Dental examinations are required upon entry into school in Kindergarten/first grade, and in grades three and seven during the school year. The required school dental examination should be conducted by a dentist and reported to the school on forms supplied by the School Nurse or on the dentists exam report. Students may also see the Mobile Dentists who are at the school during the year. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the dates Dentists are at FCS. Faxes are accepted (570-282-0930) from dental offices.

***Medications:***

Prescription and over-the-counter medication to be given at school must have a doctor's prescription stating: name of medication, dosage, route of administration, time to be given, and duration of order. Medication must be in its original container or prescription bottle. Medication is to be brought to school by a parent/guardian and given to the School Nurse with all the required information.

An authorization form allowing the School Nurse to administer the medication must to be completed by the physician, and the parent/guardian. The School Nurse supplies the forms.

***Head Lice Policy:***

At any time during the school year the School Nurse may inspect any student(s) for head lice. If lice are identified during inspection the following procedure will be implemented:

- The student(s) will be exited from the classroom.

- The parent/guardian will be called to come and get the student within the hour. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport the child home. The child will not be permitted to ride the school bus/or other communal means of transportation.
- The School Nurse will counsel the parent/guardian regarding treatment, which may include referral to physician or pharmacist, management of the student's environment and prevention.
- After the medication has been applied and all nits removed from the head, the student must be accompanied to the school by the parent/guardian and report to the nurse's office for an exam. If upon inspection the student is found to have lice or multiple nits, he/she will be denied admission until all the lice are removed.
- After consultation with the School Nurse: if repeated lice situations occur with the same student, the school nurse may contact additional community resources, including but not limited to Office of Youth & Family Services.

***Illness:***

Students must be kept home for the following:

- \* Student has a temperature of 100 degrees or greater or signs of fever, chills, muscle aches, fatigue
- \* Student is vomiting or has diarrhea
- \* Student has a contagious condition (including but not limited to ringworm, lice, pinkeye, impetigo, chicken pox, COVID)

Students must be fever and/or vomit free for 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student has a contagious condition (ex. pinkeye, chicken pox, COVID, ringworm) or a communicable spreading disease, a physician's excuse must be obtained stating that the student is cleared to return to school. Students who are feeling ill during the school day must see the School Nurse for observation. The School Nurse will make the determination whether a student goes home or remains at school. The School Nurse will call home to make arrangements for the student to be picked up from school. Parents/Guardians are required to pick students up within one hour of the phone call and are required to provide transportation. Students left at school beyond an hour may be transported to the local hospital via ambulance.

The School Nurse may require a doctor's note for return to school. Additionally the School Nurse, in consultation with the School Principal (or his/her designee) the Board President or our local Health Department Liaison may require additional health and/or safety procedures including but not limited to masking.

Faxes are accepted from a Physician's office. According to PA Code 2776, the School Nurse may exclude a child from school who is suspected of having a communicable disease, infection or condition.

Please notify the School Nurse/school as soon as possible if your child has an infectious disease or has an injury /condition which requires accommodations or limitations at school.

Any student who has an unusual/long term illness (such as a heart condition, diabetes, blood disorder, etc.) should notify the School Nurse of any special needs for the student in the event of an emergency. All information will be kept confidential.

Parents/Guardians who choose to have a student excused from a physical education class for one day, may get an excuse from the school nurse. Any excuse for longer than one day must come from the student's physician. Faxes are accepted (570-282-0930) from a Physician's office.

If a student is absent for three (3) consecutive school days (includes weekends), a doctor's note is required to return to school and to classes. Faxes are accepted (570-282-0930) from a Physician's office.

### ***Health History:***

Parents/Guardians must provide a student's health history at the beginning of each new school year the student is enrolled. Forms are sent home at the start of each year. Allergies, medical conditions/diseases and medications taken at home and at school must be listed on the form.

**AED:** 3 (three) AED's are located in the school building. Staff have been trained to use the devices and students have been made aware of their location and use.

## **Suicide Prevention Policy**

### ***Purpose:***

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all Fell Charter students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to death by suicide.

FCS:

- a) Recognizes that physical, behavioral, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes.
- b) Further recognizes that death by suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young people.
- c) Understands the ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach in helping prevent death by suicide.
- d) Acknowledges the role of the school in helping provide an environment which helps to foster positive youth development.

The Suicide Policy on Suicide Prevention is meant to be paired with support from the School Counselor as well as the Student Assistance Program (SAP). It covers actions that take place in the school, at school-sponsored functions and activities, and at school sponsored out-of-school events where school staff are present. The policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, staff, students, and volunteers. The policy also addresses appropriate school responses to suicidal or high-risk behaviors that take place outside of the school

environment which are brought to the attention of staff members. Staff who respond do so with the best of intentions and use best practices/training. Fell Charter School holds harmless staff who intervene.

**Protocols:**

All staff will receive initial (upon hire) professional development as well as continuing professional development mandated by PA Act 71 (4 hours of training every 5 years) as it relates to recognizing at-risk behaviors and suicide threats, referrals to the appropriate personnel, response procedures, postvention, and resources for youth suicide prevention.

**Prevention:**

**Policy implementation:** The School Counselor and Principal will serve as the Fell Charter School Death by Suicide Prevention Coordinators for the school. The death by suicide prevention coordinators will be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of the policy for the entire school. In the event that the School Counselor/Principal cannot be reached, the Student Assistance Program (SAP) personnel will act as the suicide prevention coordinator(s).

**Publication and Distribution:** The Death by Suicide Prevention Policy will be distributed annually via the student and employee handbooks.

**Procedures for Early Identification:** The school staff along with the School Counselor, Principal and the Student Assistance Program (SAP) will work together to identify students who demonstrate risk factors for death by suicide. Staff will be made aware of risk factors, who to contact when there is a concern and the check-in procedure with the student and family when a concern is raised.

**Referrals:** Students exhibiting risk factors will be referred to the School Counselor, who will then assess the situation and if necessary make a SAP referral. The School Counselor and SAP staff will be familiar with resources and agencies that may be called to assist a student with thoughts of suicide. The student's family will be informed about any concerns raised by school staff and will be given resources to seek help if needed.

**Intervention:**

When a student is identified as potentially suicidal, or suicidal ideation the student and the student's family will be contacted by the School Counselor and/or the Principal to assess the risk and facilitate a referral if necessary. If the School Counselor or the Principal is not available, a SAP representative will fill this role until the School Counselor or Principal can be reached.

For students at risk:

1. School staff will stay in contact with the student (for safety reasons) until a family member or help can be reached.
2. The Principal, School Counselor, and SAP representative will be notified as soon as possible. If a student verbalizes suicidal ideation during class, the teacher will ask the student to stay in class. The teacher will contact the School Counselor and the Principal to help assess the situation. The student should not be allowed to leave class alone. The student may be escorted out of the class at the discretion of the School Counselor, Principal or SAP representative.

3. A phone call should be made to the family with the School Counselor, the Principal, and/or SAP representative on the line. It is possible that emergency services may need to be called if a parent/guardian is not able to be reached.

### **Parental/Guardian Notification and Involvement:**

The Principal, SAP representative or School Counselor will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible after a student expresses suicidal thoughts in school. If the student has exhibited any type of suicidal behavior, “means of restriction” or limiting the child’s access to mechanisms for carrying out a suicide attempt will be discussed. Staff will inform the parent/guardian of suicide prevention resources in their area and encourage the parent/guardian to seek help. During the conversation, the Principal, School Counselor, or SAP representative will assess whether there is further risk of harm due to parent or guardian notification. If the suicide threat is made at a school sponsored activity or event, the above protocol will be followed.

### **Methods of Responding to a Suicide or Suicide Attempt:**

***Suicide Attempt:*** The School Counselor, SAP representative and/or Principal will contact the family to offer any needed help. Mental health resources that the family may use will be discussed. A SAP referral will be made to give the student additional in-school support. The School Counselor and/or Principal will also reach out to any other students that may have been impacted by the suicide attempt.

***Suicide:*** The School Counselor, SAP representatives, and the Principal will meet to discuss the implementation of an action plan.

1. Verify the death. Staff will talk with the parent/guardian or police to gather more information. The death should not be labeled a suicide until the cause of death has been confirmed. It is not the responsibility of the school to confirm or publish/social media information regarding a student's death.
2. Assess the situation. The Suicide Prevention Team (SAP) will meet to consider how severely the death is likely to affect other students, and to determine which students are most likely to be affected.
3. Share information. Inform the staff who have contact with the student that a death has occurred.
4. Avoid Suicide Contagion. It should be explained to staff that one purpose of trying to identify and offer services to other high-risk students is to prevent another death. The team will work together to identify other students who are most likely to be significantly affected by the death. The warning signs and reporting procedures will be discussed with staff again.
5. Initiate Support Services. Students identified as being more likely to be affected by the death may be assessed by a school vendor mental health professional to determine the level of support needed. The team may coordinate services for the students and staff in need of individual and small group counseling.

## **Reporting Procedures:**

When a student expresses suicidal thoughts:

1. Contact the School Counselor.
2. If the School Counselor cannot be reached, contact the Principal and/or the school SAP representative.
3. The School Counselor and/or Principal, or SAP Representative will contact the student's family.
4. If the threat is deemed immediate, the School Counselor, Principal, and SAP representative will call home. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the school counselor will remain in contact with the student while the Principal or SAP representative call emergency services.
5. Parents/guardians will be required to sign a release form when taking students out of school, as notification of events up to the point of exit.

## **Re-Entry Procedure:**

For students returning to school after a mental health crisis (e.g., suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization), a school vendor mental health professional, the principal, or designee will meet with the student's parent or guardian, and if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school.

1. A school vendor mental health professional or other designee will be identified to coordinate with the student, their parent or guardian, and any outside mental health care providers.
2. The parent or guardian must provide documentation from a mental health care provider that the student has undergone examination and that he/she is/ are no longer a danger to themselves or others or are cleared to return to school.
3. The designated staff person will periodically check in with student to help the student readjust to the school community and address any ongoing concerns. The designated staff person will periodically or as needed consult with the SAP representatives. A Safety Plan may be developed.

## **Recommended Resources:**

### ***Students:***

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: The Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis or their friends and loved ones. Call 1-800-273-8255. The Trevor Lifeline: Suicide prevention lifeline for LGBTQ+. Available 24 hours a day. Call 1-866-488-7386

### **Definitions:**

1. **At risk** A student who is defined as high risk for suicide is one who has made a suicide attempt, has the intent to die by suicide, or has displayed a significant change in behavior suggesting the onset or deterioration of a mental health condition. The student may have



thought about suicide including potential means of death and may have a plan. This situation may necessitate a referral, as documented in the following procedures.

2. **Crisis team** A multidisciplinary team of primarily administrative, mental health, safety professionals, and support staff whose primary focus is to address crisis preparedness, intervention/response and recovery. These professionals have been specifically trained in crisis preparedness through recovery and take the leadership role in developing crisis plans, ensuring school staff can effectively execute various crisis protocols, and may provide mental health services for effective crisis interventions and recovery supports.

3. **Mental health** A state of mental and emotional being that can impact choices and actions that affect wellness. Mental health challenges can include mental and substance use disorders.

4. **Postvention** Suicide postvention is a crisis intervention strategy designed to reduce the risk of suicide and suicide contagion, provide the support needed to help survivors cope with a suicide death, address the potential social stigma associated with suicide, and disseminate factual information after a suicide death of a member of the school community.

5. **Risk assessment** An evaluation of a student who may be at risk for suicide, conducted by the appropriate school staff (e.g., school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker). This assessment is designed to elicit information regarding the student's intent to die by suicide, previous history of suicide attempts, presence of a suicide plan and its level of lethality and availability, presence of support systems, and level of hopelessness and helplessness, mental status, and other relevant risk factors.

6. **Risk factors for suicide** Characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take his or her life. Suicide risk tends to be highest when someone has several risk factors at the same time. Risk factors may encompass biological, psychological, and or social factors in the individual, family, and/or environment.

7. **Self-harm** Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Can be categorized as either non-suicidal or suicidal. Although self-harm often lacks suicidal intent, youth who engage in self-harm are more likely to attempt suicide.

8. **Suicide Death** caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior. Note: The coroner's or medical examiner's office must first confirm that the death was a suicide before any school official may state this as the cause of death; additionally, it is not the responsibility of the school to confirm/communicate a student's death.

9. **Suicide attempt** A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to kill himself or herself. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

10. **Suicidal behavior** Suicide attempts, intentional injury to self, associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

11. **Suicide contagion** The process by which suicidal behavior or suicide influences an increase in the suicidal behaviors of others. Guilt, identification, and modeling are each thought to play a role in contagion. Although rare, suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides.

12. **Suicidal ideation** Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior which may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and should be taken seriously.

## **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

**Volunteer Requirements:** All Parents/Guardians are required to volunteer their time for two (2) hours a month. Volunteer programs benefit our school community, and enforce greater Parent/Guardian/student – Parent/Guardian/school involvement. Ways of accomplishing this requirement include but are not limited to;

- Cafeteria Duty
- Warrior Night donations, set up and/or clean up.
- Work Sessions, cleaning sessions.
- Field Trips\*
- For additional/other options, please contact the school Principal.

**\*Field Trips:** Any Parent/Guardian who attends a field trip as a chaperone must have his/her two clearances and finger prints on file in the school, **one week prior to the field trip**. No one will be permitted to attend a field trip without proper (clear) clearances and attending the pre-field trip meeting.

Field trips are part of the school curriculum and serve as a valuable addition to supporting our studies. Field trips are initiated and planned at the discretion of the classroom teacher, with building level approval from the Principal. Final approval rests with the School Board.

No student may attend a school sponsored field trip without parent/guardian written permission submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the trip. No verbal permission or last minute permission slips will be accepted. Field Trips are planned and often paid for in advance, so reimbursement for lack of attendance by a student or adult may not be possible.

Field Trips may be suspended or altered at the discretion of the Principal or School Board. In addition, students who have not performed academically well or have behavioral infractions, Emergency Contact Form is not up to date, or whose family owes money to the school may be removed from Field Trips. Students who do not have medical forms on file, by required dates, will be denied access to Field Trips.

A student will be unable to attend a school-sponsored field trip if the required Emergency Form is not on file, up to date and includes at least one additional adult (other than the parent/guardian) who may be called in an emergency.

**Chaperone Dress Code:** All approved, adult chaperones must dress appropriately for the planned activity. Chaperones, like our staff, represent Fell Charter School out in the public, and are role models for our students. Proper shoes, appropriately fitted tops, appropriately fitted pants, shorts no shorter than 1" above the knee and outerwear should be worn. Undergarments should not be visible.

## **School Counseling Program:**

School Counseling services are a part of the educational program of FCS. The purpose of the school counseling is to help students achieve in school and in life. The counseling program at Fell Charter School is designed to help students as they grow and develop. To meet this goal, school counseling services are provided through classroom guidance lessons and activities, short term individual counseling, small group counseling, as well as consultation with parent/guardians, school personnel, and outside service agencies. The Counselor believes that knowing the student as an individual and addressing his or her needs in a personalized manner is the single most important aspect of maintaining a successful school counseling program. For further information about counseling services, please contact our School Counselor or the Principal.

### **Background Clearances:**

Beginning Fall 2006, all FCS volunteers must obtain all proper (clear) clearances (Act 151, 34). These clearances will be valid in the school for two years from the date of issue. Forms are available through the school website, PA Dept. of Education website or the PA State Police website.

**Deliveries For Students:** From time to time, student items will be needed from Parents/Guardians. All personal items must be brought directly to the main office. Students may be contacted to come to the office for pick up between class changes in order to avoid interruptions or the administration or his/her designee will deliver the items.

### **Messages For Students:**

Unless an emergency, messages will be taken only from individuals listed on the Student's Emergency Contact Form. Emergency messages will be delivered between class changes by the administration or his/her designee to avoid interruptions,

### **Camera Policy:**

The use of Observation Monitors (Cameras) in FCS is to strike an acceptable balance between protecting student privacy and achieving appropriate levels of security. Camera's are also used for observation of classroom management by the Principal.

Cameras provide an additional layer of building security, provide an information resource for use in establishing systems that improve school climate, in some cases, provide a tool for teachers and/or administrators to identify behavioral cues when designing personalized behavior/education plans, provide parents/guardians with a quick reference on their child's well-being (upon request to the administration). Cameras are used in accordance with individual's right to privacy under PA law.

FCS cameras are not to be used for extended viewing periods by unauthorized persons or by persons that do not have a specific reason to view them. Parents/Guardians may only view issues/segments that pertain to their child(ren).

The Principal or designee, Board Members on official business; employees on official business; authorized teachers, law enforcement (when necessary) have access to the cameras, under the direction of the building Principal.

**Process for non-staff member viewing:** In order to avoid disruption to the school day, persons\* requesting to view the cameras must follow this process:

- Notify the Principal to request authorization, minimum of 24 hours in advance and set up an appointment.
- Sign in on viewing log indicating name, date, purpose, and time in/out.
- An administrator must be present.
- Time limit – at the discretion of the Principal.
- Cameras are used solely for educational purposes. Cameras are not used to locate lost items, etc.
- \* exception: law enforcement

### **Safety Drills:**

Safety drills are conducted regularly throughout the school year. Additional drills are conducted to prepare students for emergencies including, but not limited to severe weather, health or safety issues. The goal of each drill is to prepare students to respond quickly and appropriately to maintain their health and safety.

***Full laws (local, state and/or Federal) are not fully listed in this Student Handbook.***

*Additionally the School Board empowers the Principal discretion in determination of policies, practices and procedures listed here to ensure the safety of students and staff, the smooth and effective day to day operations of the FCS.*

***Exceptions: FCS Administration with the School Board reserves the right to amend this handbook as deemed necessary. Therefore it may become necessary to notify parents/guardians of changes subsequent to this printing/approval. Change notices will be sent home via email when approved/a comments, interpretations or concerns may be addressed to the Board in writing (see website as well).***