



Fell Charter School

Empowering students for the future

777 Main St. Simpson, PA 18407

570-282-5199

570-282-0930 (fax)

Tim Casey, Principal

tcasey@fellcharter.com

September 4, 2024

Dear Warrior Families,

The beginning of the school year has begun, and we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you about the importance of school attendance. It is important to note that all students who begin the school year at the age of 6 and above are required by Pennsylvania law to attend school.

Research clearly shows that attendance is a key factor in a student's success at school. The law defines a student as truant when he/she has three or more unexcused absences. A student becomes habitually truant when he/she has six or more unexcused absences. Students who are chronically absent are less likely to succeed academically, more likely to be suspended, and are more likely to eventually drop out of school.

Chronic absence:

- Occurs when a student misses 10% or more of the school year.
- Includes unexcused absences, excused absences, and days missed due to suspensions.

Missing two days of school per month in a 10-month school year means a student will miss approximately 20 days, or more than 10% of the year in a school year with 190 days. It is easy to see how only a few absences per month can add up to a great deal of missed time throughout the year!

Academic skills are developed in the classroom through teacher interaction, discussions between and among students and teachers, as well as through review of homework and classroom notes. Students who are chronically absent from school miss out on the opportunity to develop these essential academic and life skills. Students who are chronically absent miss out on the opportunity to develop and sustain peer relationships. Due to disruptions in learning because of illness or quarantine, our students may have already missed some opportunities to build these academic and peer relationships. Therefore, school attendance is more vital than ever before.

This letter is to remind you of the Fell Charter School Attendance Policy, which is also detailed in the Student Handbook, available on the school's website (www.fellcharter.com).

Three parent excuses per school year are allowed and they must be received within three days of the students return to school. If a student is absent for three consecutive days, a doctor's note is required in order for the student to return to school.

Three or more unexcused absences are considered a violation of the Pennsylvania Compulsory Attendance Law and carry a possible summary offense and penalty. If your child accumulates three or more unexcused absences, the following process will take place:

1. Upon verification of 3 illegal absences an email, as well as regular mail, will be sent to parents/guardians. Please be sure that we have your current email address on file at the school.
2. Student illegal absences at 5 days will initiate another email notice to parents/guardians.
3. At 6 illegal absences a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) meeting will be held. A letter will be emailed to parents/guardians with the date to attend this meeting.
4. At 8 illegal absences students are put on a doctor's verification, which means that for the 8th and each subsequent absence, the student must have a doctor's excuse for each missed day.
5. If more unexcused absences are accumulated after the SAIP meeting resulting in 10 illegal absences, the school may initiate compulsory attendance violation proceedings before the local District Magistrate, Sean McGraw, Esq. 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 magistrate. Magistrate McGraw 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.

It is our goal to work with you to ensure your child's success at Fell Charter School. It is imperative that if you are experiencing health or family issues which impact your child's attendance that we work together to ensure absences are clearly documented.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tim Casey, Principal
Emily Rogers, School Counselor