

PENNSYLVANIA DISTANCE LEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL

Book: Policy Manual

Section: Administration

Title: Visitation to School, Classroom or Program Site Policy

Reference: 34 CFR 300.519, 300.30, 300.45
22 PA Code 11.11

Adopted: September 11, 2017

Revised:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Policy is to establish rules that recognize the need of parents and guardians to be informed in their decision-making about the education of their children without compromising unnecessarily the rights of other children to a stable, safe and disruption-free learning environment.

SCOPE: Parents of students attending PDLCS.

POLICY AUTHORITY: Policy draft is reviewed by the CEO of PDLCS; then (1) sent to the Board of Trustees, and (2) presented at the next formal, public Board Meeting for review, public comments and approval.

DETAILED POLICY STATEMENT: The Board of Trustees (“Board”) of PDLCS encourages parents and guardians to make informed decisions about the programs and services recommended for, or to which the Charter School has assigned, their children. It also encourages parents and guardians who may potentially enroll their children in the Charter School to make informed decisions as well. Informed decision-making can involve visiting a recommended or assigned classroom or program site. The Charter School also encourages parents to become involved in the ongoing education and development of their children and recognizes that occasional classroom or program site visits can promote effective parental involvement. The interest that parents and guardians often have in visiting classrooms and program sites must, however, be weighed against the disruption and distraction that often accompanies such visitations. Many children require a high level of consistency and predictability and low levels of visual and auditory distraction to learn and develop.

CLASSROOMS AND PROGRAM SITES THAT ARE SUBJECT TO VISITATION: A parent or guardian, or a person with appropriate professional expertise designated by a parent or guardian, may visit a virtual classroom when (1) the Charter School has specifically recommended the classroom or program for the child; (b) the Charter School has assigned the child to that classroom or program; (c) the child is currently placed in that classroom or program. The provisions of this policy shall apply to all programs

and activities including those located in off-site locations, or before or after school hours, if at a school-sponsored event or activity.

SCHEDULING ADVANCE NOTICE: Parents or guardians must arrange visitations at least five (5) school days in advance with the Chief Executive Officer (“CEO”) of the Charter School, or other Administrator of the school in which the classroom or program or in the case of a special education program or service, with the responsible Administrator for Special Education. The parent or guardian must state the reason for the visitation. Nothing in these guidelines shall require the Charter School to schedule a visitation within five (5) days of receipt of a request unless it is required to do so by law, regulation, or order, or by agreement of the Charter School and parents/guardians, concerning an emergency or urgent circumstance.

SCHEDULING TIME: The following shall apply to the timing of visitations, other than visitations that are by teacher invitation as part of a planned parent activity:

- Visits shall not exceed one (1) hour of silent observation areas while the teacher or professional is conducting a live learning session.
- The total number of visits per parent/guardian or designee of a parent/guardian to any one teacher during a live class session shall not exceed two (2) for any one child during any twelve month period. Parental participation in classroom activities or programs such as facilitating a live classroom, back-to-back events, and chaperones for field trips shall not constitute a classroom visit for purposes of this policy.
- Timing of visits shall be determined by the Charter School, in its sole discretion, depending on such factors as the type and intensity of planned instruction or activities, the susceptibility of individual students to the disruption known or likely to be caused by the visit, the stated purpose of the visit, the number of adults the visit will place in the room at the same time and the total amount of traffic in the classroom or program at or near the time of the visit.

CONDITIONS OF VISITATIONS: The following conditions shall be observed for all visits to the physical PDLCS office:

- Visitors shall consist of not more than two (2) parents, legal guardians, grandparents or surrogate parents or one (1) appropriately qualified professional designated by the parents/guardians, at any time, to visit a teacher while he or she is conducting an online class.
- Parents or guardians must identify in writing the name, address, telephone number and professional credentials of, and must sign a release permitting the disclosure of personally identifiable information to, any appropriately qualified professional that they have designated to visit the office. Such professional must provide all mandated State and Federal child abuse and criminal clearances prior to the date of the visit to the Charter School.
- A Charter School staff member shall accompany the visitor at all times that the visitor is in the Charter School facility.
- Visitors shall refrain from conversation and from interaction with children or staff during the period of instruction or program observation.

- The CEO or the staff member responsible for the classroom or program may, in his or her sole discretion, terminate a visit at any time if, in the judgement of the CEO or staff member, the visit is significantly disrupting children, staff or the learning process or becomes a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children or staff. Failure to leave when asked or repeated, documented disruptions may result in loss of further classroom or program visitation privileges.
- During the visit, all visitors shall remain in such locations within the office or program site as are designated by the CEO or the staff member responsible for the online learning session. At the conclusion of the appointment, the parent/guardian or designated professional must report to the Charter School office to sign out in the visitor's log.
- Questions or concerns about a visit or about anything observed during a visit must be addressed to the CEO or, by appointment, to the staff member responsible for the classroom or program, before or after the visit and outside the presence of children or working staff members.
- Charter School staff shall not share with any visitor personally identifiable information concerning any students other than the student who is the subject of the observation.
- The photographic reproduction, filming or videotaping or electronic recording of an online session of school programs, students, or physical facilities by any visitor and/or any non-Charter School employee is prohibited unless prior permission is obtained in writing from the CEO.
- In response to extraordinary circumstances, or to comply with the requirements of law, regulation or order, the Charter School may waive any time line or condition established in these guidelines. No waiver given in accordance with this section shall be deemed to establish a revision or modification, or to establish a policy, practice or custom contrary to the terms and conditions, of these guidelines.

PROHIBITION OF VISITATION: Persons who arrive at the School without an established appointment will not be permitted beyond the School's designated main office until the appropriate person is notified. Failure to comply with the procedures outlines above, as incorporated into a procedure to be included in the Parent/Student Handbook, shall result in more limited access to the Charter School as determined in that procedure.

The CEO has the authority, in accordance with the Charter School rules and Federal and State law and regulations, to exclude any visitor who is considered to be disruptive or will cause disruption to the educational program, disturbing to students or staff, or intent on committing an illegal act. Whenever possible, the CEO shall specifically indicate the circumstances under which a parent may return. The CEO will implement this policy and control access to school building(s), classrooms, and school-sponsored events/programs through written procedures distributed annually to Charter School families through the Parent/Student Handbook or via other designated means of delivery.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.