

Student Wellness Check Implementation at PA's Public Cyber Charter Schools

Issue Brief - June 2026



Over the last 25 years, Pennsylvania's public cyber charter schools have been pioneers in ensuring student safety and wellbeing in an online learning environment.

See below for information on how eight public cyber charter schools are implementing the wellness check requirements in Pennsylvania's Charter School Law.

Issue Overview

In 2024, the Charter School Law was amended ([Act 55 of 2024](#)) to require that every public cyber charter school conduct wellness checks on students to ensure their health and safety. Per the law, students attending a public cyber charter school must be visibly seen and communicated with once per week by a teacher, administrator, or representative of the school. While these specific requirements were added to the Charter School Law in 2024, public cyber charter schools have been prioritizing their students' well-being and implementing internal policies to ensure student safety long before the law changed two years ago.

As mandated reporters, employees of Pennsylvania's public cyber charter school have always had the legal responsibility to report any suspected child abuse in accordance with [23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63](#) (relating to child protective services). If at any time, school personnel or a representative of the school suspects abuse, neglect, or harm to a student they are required to report their concerns to child protective services. In addition, employees of a public cyber charter school are required to complete a minimum of three hours of child abuse recognition and reporting training every five years per [Section 1205.6 of the Public School Code](#). These requirements are the same for all public schools, but public cyber charter schools go above and beyond these mandates to ensure the safety of their students.

Public cyber charter schools employ (or contract with) school nurses, school counselors, social workers, and mental health professionals to provide their students with crucial health and wellness supports that extend beyond the traditional school day. Additionally, many public cyber charter schools have staff who work regionally across the Commonwealth to provide in-person services to students and, when necessary, conduct home visits to meet with families to provide additional support.

Many public cyber charter schools employ software that can alert school personnel if a student is discussing or searching for information on topics like suicide, self-harm or harming others, abuse, bullying, and drug or alcohol use.

With this real-time information at hand, public cyber charter schools can mobilize staff to connect with at-risk students and their families to provide support and interventions when needed.

Last year, in [Act 47 of 2025](#), additional parameters were enacted regarding the implementation of the wellness check provision of the law. This included a requirement for public cyber charter schools to submit their wellness check policies to the PA Department of Education (PDE) and comply with requests from PDE to provide proof of their compliance with the law. Act 47 also imposed penalties on public cyber charter schools that fail to adhere to the requirements outlined in the wellness check provision of the law.

It should be noted, while the wellness check provision of the law requires public cyber charter schools to conduct weekly checks for every student, it does not require that students or parents comply. This disconnect between what is required of public cyber charter schools and what is required of families is an issue that needs to be discussed amongst lawmakers and public cyber charter schools.

In addition, we are calling on the General Assembly and Gov. Shapiro to ensure that laws pertaining to student safety are uniformly applied to all public schools and public entities serving K-12 students. Currently, the wellness check provision of the law only requires additional health and safety protocols for 4% of PA's public school students (the 69,000+ who attend a public cyber charter school). That leaves the 1.55+ million PA students in public school districts at risk without these additional protections, especially those in virtual learning programs run by districts and intermediate units.

Wellness Check Implementation

Central PA Digital Learning Foundation (CPDLF)

CPDLF adopted our [Student Wellness Check Policy](#) in November 2024 and is available on our website. CPDLF ensures that each enrolled student is seen and communicated with in real-time by a teacher, administrator, or other representative of the school at least once per week, many are seen and heard just about every school day. The wellness check is conducted during synchronous online instruction, provided that students have their webcams turned on and are actively engaged. In instances where a student does not have their camera on during synchronous instruction at least once a week, CPDLF implements an alternative plan to ensure compliance with this policy. Such alternatives include one-on-one video calls with a teacher or school representative, in-person meetings, or other real-time communication methods that fulfill the requirement for visual and verbal interaction. All teachers, administrators, and other school representatives, responsible for conducting wellness checks, are required to report any observed signs of neglect, abuse, or harm to students that arise during these interactions. Such reports are made in accordance with the state-mandated requirements for reporting to Child Protective Services. CPDLF's Principal or other School Leaders may also call the local authorities and request an in-person wellness check be done immediately if there is any indication of imminent danger. The School Counselor, Social Emotional Wellness Coordinator, Principal, Special Programs Director, or teacher may also conduct a home visit when necessary for the overall safety and success of the child. As a small public cyber school with a very intentional focus on developing positive and appropriate caring relationships with students and families, we have protocols in place for anyone to report suspected neglect, abuse, or harm that may be happening in a home. These reports often lead to additional supports and care being provided either by our school staff or in connection with an outside agency. CPDLF maintains records of all completed wellness checks including the date, time, and method of each check. When requested, such documentation will be provided to the PA Department of Education as part of the school's compliance reporting process.

Achievement House Cyber Charter School (AHCCS)

AHCCS created a Weekly Student Wellness Check Process to adhere to the requirements set forth in Act 55 of 2024 and ensure student well-being. AHCCS administration notified students and families of the state mandate for weekly wellness checks, outlined the new process being implemented at our school, and set the expectations for their participation in this new requirement. Synchronous students will be checked during their live virtual opportunities, while asynchronous students are expected to attend one of the many virtual check-in sessions offered each week. Additionally, participation in virtual or face-to-face events (such as health screenings, outings, or other school activities) will also count toward fulfilling this visual check-in requirement. If a visual check-in is not successful during any week, school staff will send communications to the students and their families to remind them of this requirement and set up mandatory meetings with students and their families. At any point, if an AHCCS staff member has concerns about a student's well-being, Children and Youth Services will be contacted.

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School (PALCS)

PALCS implemented the provisions in Act 55 of 2024 by requiring all students in grades K-12 to complete one wellness check per week. Our requirement to complete the checks is communicated to parents and students throughout the school year. Students are required to have their cameras on when they meet with PALCS staff members. Wellness checks can be completed during live virtual lessons, intervention sessions with a teacher or interventionist, resource lessons, at in-person events, or during a specially scheduled time between the student and a staff member. During each check, staff members record (in the school's Wellness Check Portal) whether the student completed the check and whether they are well. If it is believed that a student is not well or if a staff member has concerns, as mandated reporters, they are required to file a ChildLine Report. The ChildLine Reports are documented and tracked within the school's information system. The [PALCS Wellness Check Policy](#) was established on October 17, 2024, and is available on the school's public website.

Reach Cyber Charter School

At Reach, all students must have a minimum of weekly “eyes on” contact with school staff. Family mentors are expected to track their students’ completion of this goal using data and/or Academic Indicators on Focus. Family mentors are expected to follow up with students who are not meeting this requirement. These contacts can be done virtually (camera on) or in person. Students will have the opportunity to meet this requirement each day by attending their live lessons with their camera on. These contacts can also be made with teachers, family mentors, school counselors, school social workers, case managers, truancy officers, or any other academic staff.

Esperanza Cyber Charter School

The [Student Wellness Check Policy](#) adopted by Esperanza’s Board meets all the requirements of Act 55 of 2024. Enforcement is a challenge for some families, especially with our homeless population and families living in shelters, which is consistently over 10% of our total student enrollment. Esperanza has just over 1,000 students and a team of nearly a dozen staff members, including social workers, guidance counselors, and family coaches who carry out home wellness checks when warranted. Additionally, because the majority of our population (80-90%) live locally to the school, many of our students regularly attend monthly onsite events where they interact and check in with their teachers and friends.

Insight PA Cyber Charter School

Insight PA's Board approved a [Student Wellness Check Policy](#) in August 2024 that aligns with the requirements of Act 55 of 2024. Student support personnel and teachers complete procedures to comply with the weekly wellness check requirements via visual (camera) and sound (conversation) methods. If a student does not check in with school personnel, we make a few more electronic attempts and if unsuccessful, we conduct a home visit to verify student wellness.

PA Virtual Charter School

PA Virtual ensures that each enrolled student is seen and communicated with in real-time by a teacher, administrator, or other representative of the school at least once per week. This interaction must occur during any week in which three or more full or partial days of academic instruction are provided. The wellness check is conducted during synchronous online instruction, provided that students have their webcams turned on and are actively engaged. In instances where a student does not have their camera on during synchronous instruction, PA Virtual implements an alternative plan to ensure compliance with Act 55 of 2024. Such alternatives include one-on-one video calls with a teacher or school representative, in-person meetings, or other real-time communication methods that fulfill the requirement for visual and verbal interaction.

PA Distance Learning Charter School

The [Attendance Tracking Standard Operating Procedure](#) developed by PA Distance ensures compliance with Act 55 of 2024, which mandates that cyber charter schools visually and verbally confirm student well-being at least once per week. This policy establishes a structured, accountable system using our Student Information System to document whether students are seen and engaged with during live classes. Teachers are required to categorize each student's participation based on camera visibility and engagement level, and counselors regularly monitor this data to identify students who have not been seen or heard over specific time intervals. In addition, the school has a community engagement team that organizes in-person events, field trips, and educational tours which serve as another means to interact with students and comply with the wellness check requirements. If students fail to adhere to the school's wellness check procedures, PA Distance follows a tiered communication protocol - - escalating from digital outreach to wellness checks involving our own staff visiting the home or local authorities. This policy supports student safety and accountability in the cyber education environment by ensuring consistent interaction and mandated reporting when necessary.

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