



Cyber Charter Schools – Frequently Asked Questions

What are they?

A cyber charter school is a public charter school that provides most of its instruction to its students through the Internet or by some other electronic means.

Students who are enrolled in a cyber charter school do most of their schoolwork at home over the computer — they do not go to classes in a school building.

A cyber charter school must operate as a non-profit organization that is governed by an independent board of directors. New cyber charter schools are created by written agreement (a “charter”) with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), unlike “brick and mortar” charter schools which are given their charters by a local school board. PDE also decides if a cyber charter school’s charter will be renewed.

Who can attend?

Any child who lives in Pennsylvania can apply for admission to any cyber charter school. For instance, a child can live in Philadelphia and still enroll in a cyber charter school which is located in Pittsburgh. If more students apply than there are slots at the cyber charter school, qualified students must be selected randomly (e.g. by lottery).

Cyber charter schools also cannot limit admission on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement, English proficiency, or disability. Cyber charter schools are permitted to limit their enrollment to a particular grade level or area of concentration (the arts, mathematics, or science). Cyber charter schools may establish reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective students, but the criteria must

be outlined in the charter agreement. Cyber charter schools may also limit admission to a targeted group of "at risk" students.

Can cyber charter schools charge tuition?

No. Cyber charter schools must be free to parents and to students. Cyber charter schools cannot charge registration fees or impose other costs that would prohibit the enrollment of some students.

Are all cyber charter schools the same?

No. Each cyber charter decides how it will deliver its education program, so it's important to speak with someone at the school to find out what the school offers. Cyber charter schools usually provide their students with free computers and pay for, or reimburse families for, an Internet connection. Some schools may offer "in-person" activities in addition to computer-based programs.

There are some rules all cyber charter schools must follow. For example, at least 75% of the teachers at each cyber charter school must be State-certified. All cyber charter schools must obey civil rights laws, and all cyber charter schools must provide special education services to eligible students.

Is there a list of cyber charter schools?

A list of cyber charter schools and their contact information is available at on [PDE's website](#):

For more information about cyber schooling generally, please see ELC's "Cyber Schooling 101" available on the [Charter Schools page](#) on the website.

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