

Hello Students, Parents, and Families:

August 10, 2021

I hope you are enjoying the summer of 2021! As the new school year approaches, I wanted to reach out to share our excitement and welcome you to the GACTC for a new year of learning! It has been refreshing to feel a sense of normalcy return to our community as the pandemic related restrictions diminish. Although uncertainty remains, safety precautions must be maintained as we prepare to focus on learning and building our skills.

The last year-and-a-half taught us so much as we dealt with a pandemic while continuing teaching and learning. Most notably, we learned how important it is that students are IN school to learn, especially when learning hands-on trades and skills! Our students WANT to be in school, roll up their sleeves, and get to work with their peers and teachers! We also learned to utilize online learning tools that enhance learning beyond the classroom, keeping students engaged, whether in or out of school. Finally, we learned that our team of faculty and staff members are incredibly creative, resourceful, and adaptable.

As we look forward to the start of a new school year, we must remain mindful that while the pandemic *currently* appears to create less disruption to our daily lives, we must continue to exercise caution as we again bring together students to learn and work.

Moving forward, we must maintain a healthy level of caution and safe practices in order to keep students IN school, where we know they want to be and where they learn best. Below, you will find some suggestions, guidelines, and practices highlighting ways in which we can best maintain consistency for our students' learning. ***I know you are well aware that things can change from the time I write this letter until we actually begin school.*** In the event that changes occur, we will work hard to keep you informed. Here are some important notes for the start of school at the GACTC:

1. **School starts at the GACTC on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.** Altoona Area High School, Bellwood-Antis High School and Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School students will begin at the GACTC on Thursday, August 26, 2021.
2. Face coverings (masks/face shields) are optional but *encouraged* for students who are not vaccinated.
3. If your child has been vaccinated against COVID-19, please consider providing documentation of their vaccination to us as part of their medical file (acceptable documents are a copy of the vaccine card or doctor's note). In the event your child is identified as a close contact with a student who is positive for COVID-19, this information will allow us to keep your child in the classroom without interruption rather than requiring that they quarantine at home and miss school. (you may fax copy to 814-946-8351, email to [melissa.hagan@gactc.edu](mailto:melissa.hagan@gactc.edu), or send hard copy to the school health office)
4. Similarly, if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, please consider sharing that documentation (doctor's note, etc.) as it will allow your child to remain in class if their illness occurred within 90 days prior to their exposure at school. (you may fax copy to 814-946-8351, email to [melissa.hagan@gactc.edu](mailto:melissa.hagan@gactc.edu), or send hard copy to the school health office)

5. Please be sure to alert the Health Office (814) 505-1253 at the GACTC if your child tests positive for COVID-19. This information will allow us to appropriately record the reason for their absence and allow them to remain in school without interruption should they be identified as a close contact to another student who has COVID-19 in the future.
6. A “virtual” or “cyber” instructional option of learning is *not* available at the GACTC. We may use online methods of instruction for the purpose of keeping students engaged while they are quarantined or their school is closed, however, it is not an optional model of learning for students beyond those purposes.
7. Our leadership and instructors have put forth a great effort to configure their classrooms, shops and other learning spaces to provide for social distancing as much as possible while preserving student engagement.
8. Our maintenance and cleaning department will continue to practice enhanced cleaning and sanitation procedures. Newly acquired resources and supplies will be utilized to focus on keeping our classrooms, shops and high contact and traffic areas clean and safe.
9. Supplies such as hand sanitizer stations and disinfectant wipes will remain in classrooms, shops and labs in order to ensure that they are always in reach for students, staff and visitors.
10. Procedures have been established to disinfect shared machines and equipment between use, when necessary.

I encourage you to make sure you have an email address on file at the GACTC. Often, important information and updates are sent to parents/guardians by email, phone and even texts if you elect to be contacted that way. We love to communicate with you to share important and exciting information. Please stay tuned and do not hesitate to check our website ([www.gactc.edu](http://www.gactc.edu)) or call us at (814) 941-TECH. If you'd like to update your contact information, please contact our Student Services Department at (814) 505-1273.

Thank you for your continued support as we work hard to provide the best educational atmosphere for our students. We are looking forward to starting a new year at the GACTC!

The GACTC is committed to prioritizing the health and safety of our students and staff while maintaining a dynamic learning environment. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with questions at (814) 505-1282.

Sincerely,



Mike Selvenis, Principal