

GREATER ALTOONA CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER
SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY
2024-2025

Crime Statistics

It is the policy of Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center to provide for the safety and security of all members of its campus community. The GACTC believes that academic freedom can only flourish in an environment that is free of criminal or other disruptive activity and unsafe conditions. The GACTC is committed to maintaining the campus community as a place of study, work and residence that is free from abuse, intimidation and harassment and where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy. The GACTC will not tolerate criminal activity and will actively pursue internal discipline, criminal prosecution, or both, for all offenders.

A paper copy of the annual security report is available upon request in the Main Office of GACTC, located at 1500 Fourth Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602.

Reporting of Criminal Activities or Emergencies

The Altoona Area School District Police and the Altoona City Police Department, in partnership with the GACTC campus community, is responsible for public safety, security, campus parking enforcement, after-hours emergency maintenance, and response to law enforcement and emergency incidents. The Altoona Area School District Police Office is located at 1500 Fourth Avenue, Altoona, PA. The Altoona City Police Department is located at 1106 16th Street, Altoona, PA. Both departments have officers available 24 hours a day and can be reached by calling 814-941-6150 (AASD); (814) 949-2489 (APD) or 911 for emergencies.

The police departments respond to all campus incidents reported by students, faculty, staff, and members of the general public.

Emergency response for fire, ambulance, or hazardous materials is the responsibility of the Altoona Area Fire Department with assistance from the Hollidaysburg and Logan Township Fire Departments as well as the State Police, if needed.

Timely Warnings

A condition or incident that could compromise the safety and well-being of any member of the GACTC campus community will result in an appropriate timely warning being issued. The purpose of the timely warnings is to aid in the prevention of similar occurrences. Depending on the nature of the condition or incident, the warning may be limited to a particular location, cohort or the entire community. The Executive Director, in collaboration with the police departments, will issue the warning. Since both police departments have responsible security personnel for the campus, any situation that occurs off campus but poses a threat to the campus will be known immediately and a timely warning can be issued if warranted.

Any member of the community who is aware of an incident or emergency should notify an employee of the school who will in turn notify either the Executive Director or the police departments Command Sergeants immediately so a timely warning can be issued if need be.

Responsibility for Preparation of the Security Report and Disclosure

The GACTC administration makes a report of all crimes reported to them that occur on and near the campus. Administration compiles and classifies all of the statistics pertinent to the Campus Security Act for the purpose of making a report. Additional information on crimes committed on or near the GACTC campus is available at both police departments.

GACTC statistics and the Student Discipline Statistics are compiled by the Data Specialist—with the assistance of the Altoona Area School District Police, the Assistant Principal, and the Altoona Area Police Department. A draft of the report is then sent to appropriate members of the school community to update information from their individual areas. After all updates are made, the report is made available for review, and students and staff are made aware of it and its location upon enrollment into the school through orientation sessions as well as a review of the school policies and procedures during the first week of classes.

How to Report a Crime or Emergency—Personnel to Contact

All students, staff, and visitors should promptly report either in person or via the telephone criminal incidents, accidents, and other emergencies to the one of the Police Departments at the numbers listed below. If it is an emergency situation, 911 should be dialed and the incident reported immediately. Individuals may also report incidents in person at one of the locations listed below.

Members of the campus community are encouraged to report any activity, situation, or conduct that disrupts, adversely affects, or interferes with the function of the School and the pursuit of its educational purpose.

Should an individual choose not to report directly to the one of the departments, they may report the incident to one of the following school administrators:

- Executive Director – Eric Palmer – (814) 505-1284
- Assistant Director/Title IX Coordinator - Nicole Zernick (814) 505-1283
- Business Manager – Danielle Mehalick - (814) 505-1281
- Continuing Education Coordinator – Julie Patosky - (814) 505-1256
- Principal – Lindsay Miksich– (814) 505-1282
- Assistant Principal- Chelsea Gibbons– (814) 505-1274
- GACTC Main Office – (814) 941-8324

Confidential Reporting of Crimes

Individuals may report crimes anonymously through Blair County Crime Solvers. Individuals may provide information about a crime or suspect by calling (814) 695-7555.

For the purpose of making timely warnings and annual statistical disclosures, a voluntary confidential report of any crime can be made to the Continuing Education Coordinator, Principal, or Assistant Principal. The intent of the GACTC and the police departments is to provide information that is as accurate as possible and encourage pastoral and professional mental health counselors to refer persons that they are counseling to report crimes on a voluntary, confidential basis for inclusion in the annual crime statistics.

Security and Access to Campus Facilities

The Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center is a campus with facilities available to students and the public. Buildings are secured. Parking lots and buildings are periodically patrolled by police officers 24 hours a day 7 days a week. School premises are monitored continuously by a full-time Altoona Area School District security guard and surveillance cameras throughout the interior and exterior of the building. Security personnel are posted at the main entrances of the building.

Residence Halls

GACTC does not currently have or maintain residence halls for students.

Maintenance Security

All mechanical problems that could cause physical harm to the public or members of the campus community are given a priority status. Maintenance personnel may be contacted through GACTC phone system: (814) 941-8324. Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center incorporates environmental security design practices in the planning, building and maintenance stages of all physical structures and grounds keeping on the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center campus.

Campus Law Enforcement Agencies

The GACTC utilizes the services of the Altoona Area School District Police. A full-time Altoona Area School District Security Officer is located on campus of the GACTC during normal school hours—7:30 am to 3:00 pm. Altoona Area School District Police monitor the campus during afternoon, evening, and overnight hours—including weekends. Security officers are responsible for a full range of public safety services, including all crime reports, investigations, medical and fire emergencies, traffic accidents, and other incidents requiring security assistance. Incident reports are reported to the Principal as well as the Assistant Principal who maintain the daily crime (incident) logs, and a copy is available for public review upon request.

Escort Services: Security officers can be contacted for assistance at any time. They are available to escort students, staff, faculty, and visitors to and from buildings and parking lots on campus. If security assistance is not requested, we suggest walking with a friend rather than walking alone.

In addition to the full-time services of the Altoona Area School District Police, the GACTC works with the Altoona Police Department (proximity: 1.27 miles) to provide a safe and secure environment for campus community members. Altoona School District and Altoona City police officers enforce federal, state, and local laws and assist official school policies. The School insists that police officers treat all subjects as individuals and use their access to both school discipline and the criminal justice system to benefit individuals and the community as a whole. Other law enforcement agencies can access the School Discipline System at their discretion.

Medical Emergencies: If you have a medical emergency, dial 1253 for assistance. If it's a life-threatening situation such as the victim is unconscious, call for the rescue squad immediately at 911, and notify the switchboard operator of the situation.

Altoona Area School District Altoona City Police Departments Authority

Both the Altoona Area School District Police Department as well as the Altoona Area Police Department has the authority (including the authority to arrest individuals) to enforce all federal, state, and local laws, as well as official policies of Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center. The authority of police officers is limited to the boundaries of the Altoona Area School District property (for Altoona Area School District Police) and the City of Altoona (for the Altoona Police Department) or anywhere when in fresh pursuit of an offender. Both police departments maintain close relations with all federal, state, and local law enforcement entities. Criminal cases are filed into the Blair County Court System.

Crime Prevention

Safety/Security Awareness Programs: Security issues are discussed during the school year by school officials and guest speakers in special programs, classes, and meetings. The Security Officer at the GACTC also speaks to students about security and safety issues in classes, as requested, and makes available crime prevention pamphlets. Crime prevention videotapes are available in the Guidance Department, request for guest speaker presentations can be made, and security brochures are provided, as requested.

Prevention Tips

Protect Yourself: You are the key to your personal safety and the safety of others. By following the precautions listed below, you can substantially decrease your chances of becoming a crime statistic.

- **BE AWARE - Recognize your vulnerability.**
- **REPORT all suspicious persons, vehicles, and activities to campus security immediately.**
- **PROTECT your personal property. Keep your vehicle locked at all times. Never leave valuables where they can be seen in your vehicle; lock them in your trunk. Do not leave any personal property such as purses, books, and book bags lying around.**
- **REPORT CRIME. Call Security at Ext. 1361 REMEMBER, suspicion of a crime does not require proof! If you suspect a crime has been committed or is about to be committed, call Security at 505-1361.**
- **KNOW the location of phones. There are emergency phones located in the elevators. Each classroom/shop has a phone as well.**
- **AVOID WALKING ALONE at night. If you have classes at night or are using a computer lab, make arrangements to walk with several of your class members or ask a friend to meet you when leaving the building.**

***Criminal Activity at Off-Campus Locations**

Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center is a publicly funded career and technology center with fully accredited post-secondary programs. The school is located within Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. GACTC is operated by a Joint Operating Committee (JOC) consisting of members from the supporting school districts: Blair, Cambria and Northern Bedford counties. The GACTC does not operate any off-campus locations. There are no school recognized fraternity or sorority houses on or off campus.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it is illegal for any person under the age of twenty-one years old to possess, consume, or purchase any alcoholic beverage. The Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center strictly prohibits the possession and use of alcoholic beverages on campus-controlled property at all times.

Illegal Drugs on Campus

Post-secondary students found in possession of illegal drugs on campus will be subject to immediate removal from their program. GACTC's Drug-Free Workplace Policy and Article XIII, Section 1318 of the Public School Code of 1949 as amended, also ACT 26 of 1995 – Safe and Drug Free Schools applies to illegal drug sale, use, or possession. Secondary policy towards illegal drug use, sale, or possession follows sending school and local GACTC policy.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention

The Continuing Education Coordinator students to counseling services for drug and alcohol abuse. Presentations to students either individually or to entire classes can be scheduled, as requested by faculty/administration. These presentations deal specifically with substance abuse strategies to combat use in youth and adults. As well, students are referred for outside counseling services offered through the UPMC Altoona's Drug and Alcohol services. These referrals are made through either the Student Services or by the Continuing Education Coordinator at the GACTC. Additionally, information is handed out to students during the first week of classes concerning the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse.

The Dangers of Drug or Alcohol Abuse in the Workplace and on the Campus

There are millions of American individuals adversely affected by their progressive dependence on drugs or alcohol. Recent surveys in 2023 indicate an estimated 48.5 million Americans 12 or older battled a substance use disorder in the past year. Out of Americans, 10.2% of 12 and older report drinking.

Health Risks

The abuse of drugs and alcohol can lead to a variety of serious consequences including: poor academic performance; poor decision making; poor morale; work errors; wasted time and materials; damage to equipment; theft; tardiness; absenteeism; accidents which injure the drug abuser; accidents which put employees and students at risk of injury; and may lead to disciplinary action, prosecution, illness, and even death. Abusers of these substances experience depression, isolation, loss of memory, loss of coordination, impaired judgment, reduced morale, anxiety, paranoia and loss of self-respect.

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policies School Standards of Conduct

Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center attempts to provide a safe, comfortable academic and social environment. However, the campus is a part of society and is subject to the same concerns and problems inherent to that reality. All incidents of sexual assault are condemned by the School and will be dealt with immediately to the fullest extent of the law and the policies of the School. Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center is a community consisting of students, faculty, support staff, and administrators. The School does not attempt to define all "student conduct." It relies on students to assume the responsibility and obligation of conducting themselves in a manner compatible with the purpose of the School as an educational institution and the community as a place of residence. In addition to school rules and regulations, all students are subject to the same local, state, and federal laws as non-students and are beneficiaries of the same safeguards of rights as non-students. The academic community has a long and cherished tradition of expecting its members to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of personal behavior.

Information Concerning Sexual Assault

Sexual Assault -- Inflicting sexual contact or sexual intrusion upon or engaging in sexual penetration with any person without that person's consent. Such conduct is "without consent" when no clear consent is given; when inflicted through force, threat of force, or coercion; or when inflicted upon a person who is unconscious or otherwise without the physical or mental capacity to consent, e.g., when someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Sexual Harassment -- either from a supervisor, co-worker, faculty, staff or fellow student, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of an individual's employment or academic status;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive work or academic environment;
4. Such conduct stereotypes a gender into a degrading, less than desirable status within the work place, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment;
5. Any deliberate, unwanted or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature or sexual stereotyping, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical;
6. The behavior must satisfy these three (3) legal requirements:
 - i. Unwanted
 - ii. Unsolicited (prior behavior and dress are not indications of solicitation)
 - iii. Deliberate (It is important to understand that sexual harassment need not be repeated. A one-time-only offense may constitute harassment.)

Sexual Harassment may include:

1. Verbal harassment or abuse.
2. Subtle pressure for sexual activity.
3. Sexist remarks about a person's clothing, body or sexual activities.
4. Unnecessary touching, patting, or pinching.
5. Leering at a person's body.
6. Constant brushing against a person's body.
7. Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job, promotions, performance evaluation, grades, etc.
8. Physical assault.
9. That which comes from a person of either sex against a person of the same or opposite sex, from peers, supervisors, or subordinates, or which is directed toward any of these.

What to Do If You Are Assaulted/Reporting

DO: Victims of a sexual assault are encouraged to seek medical help, report the crime, and tell someone such as a counselor, friend, authority figure, parent or a campus security authority. Victims of nonconsensual sexual intercourse and/or activity are encouraged to file a complaint through any school office as soon as possible after the alleged incident. Parties not directly related to the college may also file complaints when a significant relationship to the mission and interest of the college can be shown. Victims can contact the Title IX Coordinator or any school employee to report an incident. Students are encouraged to discuss this matter with counselors in the school. Victims can also call Family Services Incorporated at 814-944-3583 or the Domestic Abuse Hotline at 814-944-3585 for outside and confidential help. All referral agencies adhere to strict confidentiality procedures.

Medical, Legal, Counseling and Supportive Resources for Victims

Medical

UPMC Altoona is located within a 1.19-mile radius of the campus 620 Howard Avenue, Altoona, PA (1-800-946-1902). UPMC Altoona is a full acute care facility with emergency facilities open 24 hours/day. Assault counseling is available by calling Family Services in Blair County Can Help: 814-944-3583. Mid-Penn Legal Services can be contacted at 814-943-8139 to address any legal issues/questions/concerns that you may have. Legal options for victims of sexual assault include filing a criminal complaint with the one of the police departments or civil action against the accused through an attorney. Legal options for victims of sexual harassment include all criminal and civil remedies, as well as filing complaints with school administration. Information about community legal services for victims can be obtained by calling Blair County Can Help: 814.946.8530 or www.contactaltoona.com.

Referrals

Any person may refer a victim or a student suspected of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment to any campus security authority for assistance in filing an incident report with the appropriate authority. The victim will be asked if they want medical attention. If so, a Campus Security Officer will transport them to the local hospital. Campus Security is responsible and obligated to report all crimes—including sexual assault. In cases of sexual assault/sexual harassment, which involve student-to-student misconduct, the same processes as other violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be followed. Where sexual assault and/or sexual harassment involve staff to student misconduct, the incident will be investigated.

DO NOT: Medical help is important for your safety after a sexual assault. Until you are examined by a medical professional do not douche, bathe, shower, or throw away or wash clothing or bedding.

Remember, it is critical to preserve medical and criminal evidence for a future judicial case. The decision is up to you to pursue criminal and/or school disciplinary charges. All information taken from a victim of a sexual assault is kept confidential.

Disciplinary Action

The GACTC does not have an internal judiciary committee/process. All incidences of sexual assault will be reported to local police and processed through the Blair County Court System. Both the accused and accuser are entitled to have others present during disciplinary proceedings, and both will be informed of the outcome. The victim may request changes to their academic situation, and the school will make every effort to make the changes that are reasonably available.

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Educational Programming

Educational programs to promote awareness of rape and other sex offenses and to comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act: Blair County Human Services provides sexual assault/date rape educational programs for preventative purposes, as well as programs on personal safety and workplace violence. Any student needing Health or Human Services by dialing 211; Blair County Can Help: 814.946.9050 or www.contactaltoona.com . For information about registered sex offenders residing near the school, visit the Family Watchdog website at www.familywatchdog.us . Once there, click on the button to search by location and type the school address in as follows: 1500 Fourth Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602. Additionally, information can be found on the Pennsylvania Megan's Law website at <http://www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us/> .

Adult Clearances

GACTC requests clearance from all adult students enrolled in full-time training in which they will be on the premises concurrently with minors. Adults with a record of child/minors offenses are not permitted enrollment at GACTC.

Emergency Contact Service

The Continuing Education Coordinator will serve as the primary referral point for students who need to be contacted due to an emergency. Although any campus personnel are free to deliver emergency messages to students when expedient, school directors would like to be informed in order to assure appropriate follow up and documentation.

Determining messaging for "emergencies" while students are in class will be handled on a case by case basis. It is important to note that we cannot guarantee contact with any student due to their highly mobile behavior, but a good faith effort will be made. Keep in mind that we will not become a messaging service for non-emergent situations. Depending on the type of emergency, a message will be delivered to the faculty member or work supervisor asking for the student to be dismissed and to:

1. Immediately contact the source of the message or;
2. Immediately proceed to the Director's office for pertinent information.

Procedures for Addressing a Bomb Threat

Please see Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center's Crisis Response Plan booklet.

Student Evacuation Procedures

1. Students will evacuate the building following the same procedures as a routine fire drill. All persons must leave the building. There are no exceptions!
2. Individual teachers will be responsible for student attendance. All teachers must take their attendance sheets or grade book to the evacuation site so that the taking of attendance can be conducted in an orderly and rapid matter.
3. Secondary students must be kept together at the evacuation site until the order is given to return to the building or buses are secured to return students to the home school.
4. If the weather is threatening the evacuation sites will be changed to the heavy equipment building once this area is cleared by the emergency agencies.

Weapon on School Property or Shots Fired – Staff Procedures

Please see Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center's Emergency Operations Procedures.

Campus Disciplinary Process

The secondary and post-secondary offices have separate procedures for handling disciplinary matters with students. See the appropriate director for information on the disciplinary process.