

2017-2018 Blended Learning Opportunity for Current GHS Freshmen (next year's sophomores)



Dear Parents/Guardians of Current GHS Freshmen,

As we continue to develop new ways of fostering our vision of student learning in Geneva 304, we would like to inform you of an exciting opportunity that your son or daughter might be interested in next year. All sophomores are required to take Health & Safety for one semester. Similar to this year, a few of next year's course sections have been designated as "Blended Learning Health & Safety". These sections will cover the same curricular topics as our standard Health course, but in a different, more flexible manner.

Blended learning means that there is some variability in the place, path, or pace of student learning. In our Blended Learning Health & Safety course many of the activities will be highly-collaborative, technology-driven, and student-centered with some element of student control over the place, path, or pace of learning. The course will be structured as follows:

First 4 weeks of the semester	In addition to covering the course content in a traditional classroom environment, students will receive instruction on effective time management, communication skills, and collaborative teamwork in a technology-rich learning environment.
Weeks 5+	Students will spend 3 days per week in a traditional classroom setting, with 2 days per week devoted to working in collaborative student groups or individually on projects and assignments for the course. Students might work in the classroom, library, cafeteria, or commons, and may work directly with the teacher, individually, or with a student group depending on the nature of the assignment. For example, some students in the class may be working together in the library on a group presentation, some students may be collaborating with other students online, while other students may be working with the teacher in the classroom reviewing material for an upcoming test. Smaller groups and individual students within the class will also be able to receive more individualized attention and instruction in the blended learning format.

Answers to some frequently asked questions about Blended Health & Safety (FAQs):

- **What qualities will help make a student successful in a blended course?** Students should reflect on their ability to manage their time, be self-motivated, ask questions when needed, and navigate in an electronic learning environment (ability to navigate websites, word processing, downloading/saving/uploading documents, etc.). An average level of technological literacy will be sufficient.
- **Will there be more work in the blended course?** Not necessarily more work, but it does mean the work will look different. While students in both the blended and traditional health courses will cover the same content and curriculum, students in the blended course will be working in a different format, independently and in groups, and with a greater focus on the use of technology.
- **Does my student need their own computer to participate in this course?** All GHS sophomore students will be able to use their school issued computer.

- **Is this an online class?** No. Although there will be some course material online and students may work on online projects, there will always be a classroom teacher instructing and/or available during the class period. This learning environment is similar to what many students will experience in college. The focus is less about the technology itself and more about the student skills that are fostered by the use of technology.
- **Who will teach this class?** We have two GHS health teachers, both of whom will be teaching sections of Blended Health & Safety next year. The teacher will be in the classroom every day during the class period providing direct instruction, serving as a resource, or working with smaller groups of students.
- **Are there tests and quizzes?** Yes. The tests and quizzes will generally be the same as those in the traditional sections of Health & Safety and most will be taken in class in a traditional format.
- **How does taking a blended course affect a student's grade point average?** This course will count the same as our traditional Health & Safety course.
- **Do students need to remain at school when they are not working in the classroom?** Yes. In addition to the classroom, there are a variety of areas of the building that will be available for these students to work. Any student with a low grade in the course will be required to attend the classroom daily until their grade improves.

We feel that the blended learning approach will offer multiple benefits to students, including an increased focus on:

Student-centered learning	Team collaboration
Time-management skills	Technology literacy
Effective Communication	Increased individual attention
Fostering both academic enrichment to high achievers and remediation to struggling students	Allowing students to develop a better understanding of how they learn best

This opportunity is certainly different from what we as adults experienced in high school, and we anticipate that parents may have some additional questions about this course. As such, we have scheduled a drop-in Q&A session on Thursday, May 4th from 6:00-7:00 PM in the GHS Community Room. If this time is not convenient for you to get your questions answered, please contact GHS at 630-463-3800 or email ddrexler@geneva304.org

If you would like your son or daughter to be considered for participation in the Blended Learning Health & Safety course next year, please call 630-463-3800 or email ddrexler@geneva304.org on or before Friday, May 12th. Please note that due to limited space in this course, and the potential of scheduling conflicts that may exist with other classes your son or daughter has selected, not all students who express interest can be placed into this course. Students will receive confirmation that they are in Blended Health & Safety when course confirmations are available in late spring/early summer.

We are excited about this new opportunity for student learning and hope that you give this option serious consideration.