



# Transition to College Guide for GEAR UP Scholar Families



# CONGRATULATIONS!

Your student has completed the hard work necessary to graduate from high school and taken the steps necessary to be accepted into college! These are huge accomplishments – congratulations!

GEAR UP Kentucky has some great news for you. **Your student is now a GEAR UP Scholar**, which means that support from GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK) will continue through their first year of college – for them, and for you! Find your student's GEAR UP Kentucky postsecondary partner institution logo below, and meet their designated GEAR UP Kentucky Postsecondary Transition Coordinator!

## Meet the GEAR UP Kentucky Postsecondary Transition Team:

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# Let's Get Ready for College!

## *Month-by-Month Task Lists*

Use the following series of task lists to help your student identify what needs to be completed over each of the next 4 to 5 months, to prepare for college in the fall.

- **ONGOING** | *Time to Get Up to Speed*
- **APRIL: Spring Forward** | *Time to Prepare*
- **MAY: Goodbye HS, Hello College** | *Time to Celebrate*
- **JUNE: College, Here We Come** | *Time to Pay a Visit*
- **JULY: Almost Here** | *Time to Get Excited*
- **AUGUST: The Big Day** | *Time to Start This Great Adventure*







*Note: Review the Legend at the bottom of each page to identify which tasks are highest priority, as well as which tasks are only for those who are attending 4-year colleges/universities.*

# ONGOING EACH MONTH (or until otherwise completed) | Time to Get Up to Speed

## STUDENT Tasks

## PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks

## Tips, Reminders, Opportunities

<p><b>1</b>  <b>Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)</b>, if not already done, to determine eligibility for Financial Aid and allow for the completion of all other college transition tasks.</p>	<p><b>1</b>  <b>Obtain FSA ID</b> for use with student's FAFSA information; <b>provide information (ex. tax info) to assist with student's FAFSA completion.</b></p>	<p><b>1</b>  <b>Every other aspect of the transition to college experience is dependent upon the FAFSA being completed.</b> Seek help as needed from GUK Representative, HS Counselor, and/or College Financial Aid Offices. <b>Overview of everything needed to complete the FAFSA:</b> <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/e7j5uabk">https://gearupky.tiny.us/e7j5uabk</a></p>
<p><b>2</b> <b>If selected/as applicable, complete the FAFSA Verification process.</b> Get this done as early as possible to avoid delays.</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Assist with FAFSA Verification process, as applicable</b> – to include reaching out to the HS Counselor, GUK Representative, KHEAA, or College Financial Aid Office, if needed.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Have you been selected for Institutional Verification *or* KHEAA Verify? Contact the College Financial Aid Office to confirm; reach out to your GUK Representative if you need help.</p>
<p><b>3</b>  <b>REVIEW AND ACCEPT FINANCIAL AID AWARDS:</b> Complete all local, institutional, *and* federal requirements – public &amp; private – related to the acceptance of financial aid ~ grants, loans, scholarships, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Student Loan Acknowledgment</b> for any Federal Student Loans</li> <li>• <b>Master Promissory Note</b> for loans involving the U.S. Department of Education</li> <li>• <b>Student Loan Entrance Counseling</b> through FSA</li> <li>• <b>Work Study Program</b> orientation/introduction</li> </ul> <p><b>MORE INFO:</b> <a href="https://tinyurl.com/undFAletter">https://tinyurl.com/undFAletter</a>  <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/FAlettervid">https://gearupky.tiny.us/FAlettervid</a></p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>Complete all applicable requirements for the acceptance of any financial aid awarded</b> in the parent/family member/other adult's name(s), <b>*This is separate from financial aid awarded in the student's name*</b></p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>NOTE: Parents with PLUS Loans need to complete financial aid acceptance requirements in addition to students with student loans.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Student Loan Acknowledgment: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/rphwpjaa">https://gearupky.tiny.us/rphwpjaa</a></li> <li>• Master Promissory Note: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/y8jdz5x">https://gearupky.tiny.us/y8jdz5x</a></li> <li>• Student Loan Entrance Counseling: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/y3uzr7vv">https://gearupky.tiny.us/y3uzr7vv</a></li> <li>• Work Study: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/yckmfhjb">https://gearupky.tiny.us/yckmfhjb</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> <b>Register / Attend / Participate in GUK Senior Events</b>, as scheduled (ex. FAFSA Frenzy, GEAR UP Go Day, Early Campus Orientation, etc.).</p>	<p><b>4</b> <b>Register and attend, or otherwise participate in, family components of GUK Senior Events</b> and activities, as scheduled.</p>	<p><b>4</b> <b>Bring a parent, family member, or other caring adult</b> to GEAR UP Go Day, GUK Early Campus Orientation events, etc.</p>
<p><b>5</b> <b>Meet with / provide status updates</b> to your GEAR UP representative(s).</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Touch base</b> with your student's GEAR UP Representative(s), as applicable.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Ensure accurate contact information</b> for use with GEAR UP student and family communications.</p>
<p><b>6</b> <b>Check your email at least 1x/week</b> for college-related items and respond accordingly.</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>Remind your student to check their email</b> for important info, needs, etc., and respond accordingly.</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>Stay informed and complete all tasks or requests from the college</b> in a timely manner.</p>

# APRIL: Spring Forward | Time to Prepare

STUDENT Tasks	PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks	Tips, Reminders, Opportunities
<b>1</b> Make final decision around college selection, and complete all correspondence related to formal acceptance, as applicable.	<b>1</b> Help your student weigh their options; discuss the value of their investments of time and money, as well as any sacrifices involved, and which college option might be the best fit.	<b>1</b> Use this link to help compare financial aid offers from multiple college institutions: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/mr3knb69">https://gearupky.tiny.us/mr3knb69</a>
<b>2</b> Establish a <i>*personal, non-school*</i> email account for use with college transition and correspondence needs.	<b>2</b> Ask your student each week about any emails received from the college, and what action steps they plan to take in response.	<b>2</b> Check for email from the college every week, at minimum; consider an account or folder to keep college-related info separate from all other emails.
<b>3</b> Register for New Student / First Year Student Orientation at your College Institution and pay any associated fees.	<b>3</b> Identify First Year Student Orientation parent/family components or activities, and plan to attend/participate.	<b>3</b> (A) <i>*Talk to your GUK PTC about requesting an Orientation Fee Waiver if you have Pell Grant Eligibility Status!*</i> (B) Ask about GEAR UP Early Campus Orientation.
<b>4</b> Research/confirm any placement exams or testing requirement needs and schedule, as applicable.	<b>4</b> Some exams are required before students can register for college courses (reading/math placement), while others are optional (ex., another ACT).	<b>4</b> Ask about options to cover the costs of deposits, registration, or other fees (ex. waivers) when scheduling these tests or exams. About ACT fee waivers: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/waivers">https://gearupky.tiny.us/waivers</a>
<b>5</b> Discuss and confirm living arrangements for first year of college (ex. home, on-campus, off-campus housing, etc.), inc. extended weekends & holiday breaks.	<b>5</b> Ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands the student's living arrangements – including the costs involved.	<b>5</b> Identify potential roommate(s) and coordinate plans for Housing Application or lease completion details, as applicable.
<b>6</b> Complete Housing Application and pay deposit on or before deadline.	<b>6</b> Note all deadlines associated with on-campus housing. Encourage your student to be alert and proactive; housing is often limited/in high demand.	<b>6</b> Identify any specific institutional requirements for Housing (ex. vaccines) not listed here; contact Enrollment Office to confirm.
<b>7</b> Review Meal Plan options – select and purchase best fit.	<b>7</b> Take into account the realities of your student's time on campus – before, after, & in-between classes – to help guide them toward the best option.	<b>7</b> <i>*Meal plans can apply to students living on campus as well as commuter students at both 2-year and 4-year institutions.</i>
<b>8</b> Confirm transportation arrangements for first semester/year, including daily commutes and weekend trips back and forth to home/campus, etc.	<b>8</b> Discuss the impact of daily commutes or trips back home as they relate to weekly gas and vehicle maintenance expenses.	<b>8</b> Research options outside of personal vehicle use – ex. public transportation, ride sharing, etc. – to save money. Check with the campus transportation/parking office.
<b>9</b> Schedule appointment with your GEAR UP representative(s).	<b>9</b> Touch base with your student's GEAR UP representative(s), as applicable.	<b>9</b> (A) Ensure accurate contact information for use with GEAR UP student and family communications. (B) Meet your designated GEAR UP Kentucky Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC).

LEGEND | ★ Priority task or information    ▲ 4-year college/university only (If not marked, relevant for both 2- and 4-year.)

# MAY: Goodbye High School, Hello College | Time to Celebrate

STUDENT Tasks	PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks	Tips, Reminders, Opportunities
<b>1</b> Continue / complete any unfinished tasks from previous month.	<b>1</b> Assist your student with completion or continuation of unfinished tasks from previous month(s).	<b>1</b> Seek assistance as needed from your HS Counselor, GUK Representative, and/or the college.
<b>2</b> Attend and complete New Student/First Year Student Orientation at college.	<b>2</b> Attend or otherwise participate in New Student / First Year Student Orientation activities for parents/families.	<b>2</b> Register for / complete GEAR UP Early Campus Orientation; connect with your GUK PTC to do this.
<b>3</b> Confirm that your college receives your final high school (HS) transcripts. ★	<b>3</b> Remind your student to ensure the delivery of their final HS transcripts to the college. ★	<b>3</b> Seek assistance as needed from GUK representatives, HS counselor, and/or the college. ★
<b>4</b> Confirm roommate option(s) for first year; contact them as applicable	<b>4</b> Consider contacting/meeting the parents/family members of your student's roommate(s), as applicable.	<b>4</b> Discuss potential cost-savings options for shared living arrangements – whether on- or off-campus.
<b>5</b> Identify all technology needs and associated costs (ex. college-provided vs. purchase vs. rental; print services, etc.) ★	<b>5</b> Discuss your student's technology needs and all available options with them. <i>*Make sure they reach out to the college prior to making (or asking you to make) any purchases.</i> ★	<b>5</b> Remember to include all technology needs – ex. calculators, laptops/tablets, software, printing, reliable, broadband internet access, etc. <u>Ask the college about options BEFORE making purchases!</u> ★
<b>6</b> Develop a list of college supplies and materials, along with plans to obtain them (ex. purchase, rent, borrow, grad gifts, etc.). ★	<b>6</b> Help your student in the development of this list and ideas or options to obtain the items in question.	<b>6</b> Consider asking others for advice – ex. college students, older siblings, family friends, etc. ★
<b>7</b> Create a monthly college budget for use with all expenses (academic as well as living expenses and social activities).	<b>7</b> Consider creating a monthly college budget “parent version” to accompany your student's budget, then identify cost-savings opportunities between the two.	<b>7</b> Check out this resource that help with budget creation: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/studentaidsg22">https://gearupky.tiny.us/studentaidsg22</a>
<b>8</b> Schedule medical appointments – for routine needs, as well as college requirements – ex. physical, immunizations.	<b>8</b> Discuss and confirm plans for your student's medical treatment and prescription needs during college. <i>Learn about FERPA &amp; HIPAA, &amp; the differences in the two (*link in next column).</i>	<b>8</b> Make sure to discuss any prescription refill needs with your medical provider. <a href="https://gearup-ky.tiny.us/2p8fmb96">https://gearup-ky.tiny.us/2p8fmb96</a> ★
<b>9</b> Purchase a Parking Pass, as applicable.	<b>9</b> Consider the pros and cons of purchasing a parking pass for the semester vs. the entire year.	<b>9</b> NOTE: Try to do this as early as possible; many schools only have a limited number available. ★
<b>10</b> Review Meal Plan options – select and purchase best fit (if applicable).	<b>10</b> Take into account the realities of the student's time on campus – before, during, and in-between classes – to help guide them toward the best option.	<b>10</b> *Meal plans can apply to both students living on campus and commuter students.
<b>11</b> Complete New Student /First Year Student Orientation at College Institution.	<b>11</b> Attend or otherwise participate in New Student / 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Student Orientation activities for parents/families.	<b>11</b> Complete GEAR UP Early Campus Orientation.

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# JUNE: College, Here We Come | Time to Pay a Visit

STUDENT Tasks	PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks	Tips, Reminders, Opportunities
<b>1</b> Continue / complete any unfinished tasks from previous month.	<b>1</b> Assist your student with completion or continuation of unfinished tasks from previous month(s).	<b>1</b> Seek assistance as needed from your GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC), and/or appropriate college representatives.
<b>2</b> Complete New Student / First Year Student Orientation at college institution and GEAR UP Early Campus Orientation, as scheduled.	<b>2</b> Attend or otherwise participate in New Student / First Year Student Orientation activities for parents/families.	<b>2</b> Locate and tour all buildings on campus that apply to you and your college-going experience (classes, dorms, etc.). ★
<b>3</b> Register for classes as soon as possible / as soon as you are able or eligible. ★	<b>3</b> Assist your student as needed / applicable.	<b>3</b> Identify and confirm any barriers to registration; take action immediately; ask for help as needed. ★
<b>4</b> Confirm roommate option(s) for first year; contact them as applicable/appropriate.	<b>4</b> Ask your student about any possible roommate agreements (ex. supplies, living expenses or purchases).	<b>4</b> Consider shared responsibilities for move-in day, if applicable and appropriate.
<b>5</b> Confirm all dorm items, supplies, and transportation arrangements for move-in day. ▲ Here's a sample packing list to get you started: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/packinglist">https://gearupky.tiny.us/packinglist</a>	<b>5</b> Discuss transportation options available for move-in day with your student; request time off from work to transport or accompany your student, as applicable. ▲	<b>5</b> Research options outside of personal or family vehicle use – ex. UHaul rentals, multiple trips to campus over time, ride sharing with a roommate – to save money. ▲
<b>6</b> Review college supplies and materials list – including tech – make plans for purchases or arrangements for outstanding needs. ★	<b>6</b> Assist your student in reviewing inventory – discuss and confirm their plans for any outstanding needs. ★	<b>6</b> Don't be afraid to ask for help with finding items, alternatives, or resources to assist with purchases! ★
<b>7</b> Schedule a touch-base appointment (virtual or in-person) with your GEAR UP Kentucky Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC).	<b>7</b> Consider accompanying your student to their touch-base appointment with their GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC).	<b>7</b> Ensure accurate contact information – Student and Parent – for use with GUK text communications. Double-check with your GUK PTC on this.
<b>8</b> Explore the college website and find the pages that you'll most commonly need to visit.	<b>8</b> Explore the college website and subscribe to any parent or family newsletters.	<b>8</b> Save key pages as favorites in your browser for easy, future reference.
<b>9</b> Secure textbooks and other course materials following completion of Orientation and class registration.	<b>9</b> (A) Help your student identify ALL options for textbooks and course materials – ex. purchase, rental, electronic formats, etc. (B) Educate yourself and student around how to pay for textbooks and other course materials if they haven't received their financial aid (see next column). SOURCE: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/2s5ywj89">https://gearupky.tiny.us/2s5ywj89</a>	<b>9</b> Schools that participate in federal student aid programs must provide a way for students to obtain books & supplies by the 7 <sup>th</sup> day of the term if: ★ • You are eligible for disbursement (i.e., the payment of your financial aid) 10 days before the term begins, and • You will have a credit balance (i.e., money left over) after your financial aid is applied to your tuition, fees, and other school charges as applicable. *Your school can tell you if the above criteria apply to you*







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# JULY: Almost Here | Time to Get Excited

STUDENT Tasks	PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks	Tips, Reminders, Opportunities
<b>1</b> Continue / complete any unfinished tasks from previous month.	<b>1</b> Assist your student with completion or continuation of unfinished tasks from previous month(s).	<b>1</b> Seek assistance as needed from your GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC), and/or appropriate college representatives.
<b>2</b> Complete New Student / First Year Student Orientation at college institution and GEAR UP Early Campus Orientation, as scheduled.	<b>2</b> Attend or otherwise participate in New Student / First Year Student Orientation activities for parents/families.	<b>2</b> Locate and tour all buildings on campus that apply to you and your college-going experience (classes, dorms, etc.). ★
<b>3</b> REGISTER FOR CLASSES ASAP, if you haven't already done so, following completion of New / 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Student Orientation ★	<b>3</b> Assist your student as needed / applicable.	<b>3</b> Identify and confirm any barriers to registration; take action immediately; ask for help as needed. ★
<b>4</b> Contact the Financial Aid Office to make sure they have all of your information confirmed and in order.	<b>4</b> Help your student identify any potential outstanding financial needs for you or for them.	<b>4</b> Use email for correspondence with the Financial Aid Office – it provides a helpful paper trail for you and for them; remember, they deal with 1000s of students!
<b>5</b> Ensure completion of physical exam and any immunizations as required by the college. ★	<b>5</b> Consider keeping copies of student's completed exams and immunization records.	<b>5</b> Identify and follow the protocols established by your college and medical provider to release your records. ★
<b>6</b> Review your college supplies and materials list – make final purchases or arrangements. ★	<b>6</b> Review your student's supplies and materials list and assist them with any outstanding items.	<b>6</b> (1) Always have a Plan B; ★ (2) Separate "nice-to-have" vs "need-to-have" items; (3) Sometimes "no" just means "not right now"
<b>7</b> Confirm your assigned move-in date and time with the Housing/Resident Life Office. ▲4	<b>7</b> Confirm your student's assigned move-in date and time; revisit any work or other scheduling needs. ▲4	<b>7</b> Review your student housing location and move-in day logistics – ex. parking, loading/unloading zones, and available help. ▲4
<b>8</b> Continue to explore the college website and identify two student clubs or organizations that you'd like to consider joining.	<b>8</b> Continue to explore the college website and consider signing up for parent/family organizations or activities.	<b>8</b> Save key pages as favorites in your browser for easy, future reference.

LEGEND | ★ Priority task or information    ▲4 4-year college/university only (If not marked, relevant for both 2- and 4-year.)

# AUGUST: The Big Day | Time to Start This Great Adventure

STUDENT Tasks	PARENT/GUARDIAN Tasks	Tips, Reminders, Opportunities
<b>1</b>  Continue / complete any unfinished tasks from previous month(s) ASAP.	<b>1</b> Assist your student with completion or continuation of unfinished tasks from previous month(s).	<b>1</b> Seek assistance as needed from your GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC), and/or college representatives.
<b>2</b> If you are moving out of the house to attend college, talk to your family and set expectations about how you all will communicate/keep in touch.	<b>2</b> If your student will be moving out of the house to attend college, talk with them ahead of time about plans to communicate/keep in touch.	<b>2</b> Read this article to learn about effective ways to communicate with your college student: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/collegecommunicate">https://gearupky.tiny.us/collegecommunicate</a>
<b>3</b> Touch base with your GUK POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION COORDINATOR (PTC) after move-in to confirm your arrival. <b>4</b> 	<b>3</b> Feel free to reach out to your student's GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC) if you need an ear – or a shoulder – after your student's move-in day! <b>4</b> 	<b>3</b> Reach out to your GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC) for help with any questions leading up to or following Freshman Move-In Day. <b>4</b> 
<b>4</b> Participate in at least two social events for First-Year Students during Welcome Week.	<b>4</b> Ask your student to share their favorite part of Welcome Week with you - and research campus parent organizations you may want to join.	<b>4</b> Share your favorite Welcome Week moment with GEAR UP!
<b>5</b> YOU MADE IT TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES! Have fun, and enjoy the start of Fall Semester as a college student and GEAR UP Scholar! 	<b>5</b> Have fun and celebrate your student's college student and GEAR UP Scholar status!	<b>5</b> Remember: Your GUK Postsecondary Transition Coordinator (PTC) is available to you throughout the entire first year of college! 
<b>6</b> The transition to college can be stressful for some students. If you find yourself struggling, don't hesitate to reach out to your GUK PTC or to campus counseling services. They are there to help you!	<b>6</b> The transition to college can be stressful for some students. Find out where and how counseling and mental health services are available to students and make sure your student is aware of how to take advantage of those services if needed.	<b>6</b> Read this article to learn symptoms that indicate emerging mental health issues, as well as what to do if these symptoms are present: <a href="https://gearupky.tiny.us/transitionmh">https://gearupky.tiny.us/transitionmh</a>

# WHERE TO TURN FOR ASSISTANCE IN COLLEGE

Suppose your student is having trouble making friends, feels incompatible with their roommate, or struggles to manage their class responsibilities along with other commitments (ex., school and work). While feeling "stuck" can be very discouraging, it's also not uncommon for first-year college students. **Reassure your student that they are not alone, and that college campuses have many resources available to help them – \*regardless of whether or not they live on campus.\***

**Don't Forget! YOU are a very important source of support, guidance, and reassurance for your student!**  
Helping students learn what type of resources are available, where they're located on campus, and how to access them is half the battle.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES & SUPPORTS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS (\*listed alphabetically)

- **Academic Advisors** ~ Help with identifying appropriate classes, explaining prerequisites, and planning course schedules. If your student attends a university, their advisor will usually be in the same school or college in which your student is enrolled.
- **Bursar's Office** ~ The place where students pay various types of fees, such as tuition and parking passes. Students can also cash checks at the Bursar's Office of some college institutions.
- **Career Center** ~ The place to find jobs, internships, and learn about careers. Oftentimes, career counselors are also available to help with specific skills, such as interviewing, resume writing, and even summer employment opportunities. *\*Note: Some institutions also have separate, Student Employment Centers that list of on- or off-campus jobs for students.*
- **Counseling or Wellness Services** ~ Provides help with students' personal issues (ex. managing independence, resolving conflicts, adjusting to college life) as well as activities to support good mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **Financial Aid Office** ~ Provides information on various types of available aid (grants, loans, scholarships), as well as the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). **One of the most important resources for any college student!**
- **GEAR UP Kentucky Postsecondary Transition Coordinator** ~ FREE, extra support resource for GUK first-year college students and their families; available to **help with ANY financial, academic, cultural, emotional, and/or social needs.**
- **Health Services** ~ Address students' physical and mental health needs, either through the direct provision of medical treatment and services (ex. medical appointments, prescriptions, urgent care) or partnerships within the local community.
- **Housing Office or Resident Life** ~ The place to go for help with on-campus housing (dorm) needs, including roommate concerns. *\*Each student living in a college dorm has a specific **Resident Advisor (RA)** assigned to them, who functions as a direct, first line of support.*
- **Library** ~ Provides reference librarians who can assist with online and print resources and locate research materials. *\*Some schools have different libraries for different types of materials; if so, your student may wish to note which library best fits their needs.*
- **Professors** ~ Aside from serving as course instructors, professors can also help students get a better grasp of subject matter during 1:1 office hours, or provide recommendations for study sessions, tutoring, and/or other academic supports.
- **Registrar's Office** ~ Keeps records of students' grades and schedules, graduation requirements, and enrollment procedures.
- **Student Life Office** ~ A resource for students with disabilities, specialized learning needs, or students needing help with life skills.
- **Technology Support Center** can provide assistance for any issues with email, online learning platforms, and other tech issues.