



# New Day *new way*

Plans and Possibilities  
for returning to Atlanta Girls' School  
Fall 2020



Some things never change.



Inspiring girls to lead  
lives of purpose

## Message from the Head of School



July 2020

Dear AGS Community,

As I reflect on the past school year, I am reminded of the power of collaboration, compassion, and community. Our pivot to distance learning and adaptation to a new environment could not have happened otherwise. Our faculty and staff have been working to prepare for the new school year in a new way, knowing that the demands from COVID-19 will require us to reinvent and reimagine. Our small size allows us to be nimble, flexible, and creative as we make every attempt to have girls on campus.

Atlanta Girls' School is committed to delivering our mission, Inspiring Girls to Lead Lives of Purpose, through an educational experience that is specifically designed to meet the needs of girls while keeping their safety and well-being our priority. Whether the experience is on-campus with safety precautions in place or at home in a virtual environment, you can be confident in our commitment to deliver our mission.

Our plans to re-open campus are guided by the following principles:

- **Safety & Well-being:** Ensuring a safe learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.
- **Flexibility:** Having the ability to shift and pivot effectively and efficiently with minimal disruption.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI):** Applying a DEI lens to determine how decisions will impact our diverse student body and families.
- **Community:** Embracing and growing our community both on and off campus while maintaining social distancing.
- **Pedagogy & Instruction:** Continuing to develop and deliver quality instruction to meet the needs of our students and how girls learn best.

In order to safely and effectively re-open campus, we are assessing information and developing guidelines and procedures to ensure the health and safety of our learning community. Your input and feedback from the parent survey helped us shape our plans for re-opening under several potential scenarios. While we are planning to re-open campus on August 12, 2020, under "Scenario 2: Hybrid Learning" (described on p. 9), we are monitoring conditions closely and will be prepared to pivot as needed. We plan to communicate with you as often as possible and with transparency to ensure a smooth transition into the 2020-2021 school year.

While there is so much uncertainty right now, we have found hope and a renewed sense of resilience. I look forward to seeing and connecting with students, faculty, and parents on August 12th. It will be a new day, in a new way, but our mission to our girls will never change.

Sincerely,



Ayanna Hill-Gill  
Head of School

## TASK FORCE

Atlanta Girls' School (AGS) has established a task force committee, with several sub-committees, which is working throughout the summer to develop a comprehensive strategy for re-opening the school that allows for flexibility and prioritizes the health and safety of our school community. They are addressing policies, procedures, and logistics with an eye toward planning for a future that will most likely be unpredictable and constantly changing.

They are focused on these key areas:

- Health & Safety
- Teaching & Learning
- Student Life
- Facilities
- Advancement (Admission, Development & Communications)
- Technology
- Employee Relations

## CURRENT UNDERSTANDING ABOUT COVID-19

- COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- COVID-19 is often spread from person to person through close contact and maintaining social distancing can greatly mitigate its spread.
- Until a vaccine is widely available, COVID-19 will be a concern for public health.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION & KNOWLEDGE

Atlanta Girls' School is basing its preparations and guidelines for reentry and operating on the information and guidance currently available from:

- The Centers for Disease Control
- The World Health Organization
- Georgia Dept. of Health and other health experts

In addition, the Atlanta Girls' School is in communication with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), The Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), international, national, and regional schools and districts.

## FACULTY & STAFF

All AGS teachers have participated in a rigorous course over the summer called One SchoolHouse: Designing, Building & Teaching for Hybrid Learning. This three week course focuses on training middle and high school teachers in the essentials of hybrid course design, development, and facilitation. Hybrid learning entails leveraging both in-person learning on campus and distance learning simultaneously. Teachers learned to design, build, and deliver a course with the assumption that some of the student work will be done fully online at any given time, either synchronously during a virtual live class or asynchronously when instruction, learning, or work is done at a different place or time than a live class.

## AUGUST IN A NEW WAY

If we are on-campus under Scenario 1 or 2 in August, our time on campus will look different than a typical start to the school year. The first few weeks of school will be dedicated to train students on new protocols to adhere to physical distancing and best practices for hygiene, as well as teach the academic and executive skills that are difficult to teach through distance learning. We will also focus on re-building our community and relationships with one another, emphasizing social and emotional development and well-being. Lastly, to prepare for a potential shift to distance learning, we will also use our time in August teaching and using online platforms, establishing norms and expectations consistent with distance learning, and coaching students to develop routines and habits useful for distance learning.



## SCENARIO 1: ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

**Under this scenario, COVID-19 is under control and poses a low risk to our community.**

AGS campus will be open to all students and faculty with social distancing and other necessary restrictions in place to maintain the health and well-being of our community.

### Teaching & Learning:

- When possible, students, faculty and staff will remain in small, static groups. Student desks will be separated with a 6 feet radius.
- Students and teachers will remain in the classroom for the majority of their day, including lunch.
- Common spaces will not be used or may be repurposed to provide extra space for classes.
- Students will not be allowed to share materials and supplies.
- Students will be taught physical distancing and hygiene protocols and practices.

### Afterschool Programs & Community Events:

- Any school events or programs for groups of 10+ people will be cancelled, modified, or held virtually.
- Athletic programs will be suspended or modified to meet social distance requirements.
- Aftercare will be available but will require pre-registration so we can accommodate for space and supervision. Before care will not be available. Details on pick-up and drop-off protocols will be shared closer to the start of school.
- Guests to campus (including parents) will be limited.



## SCENARIO 2: HYBRID LEARNING

**Under this scenario, COVID-19 poses a medium risk to our community.**

Students will receive instruction partially on-campus and partially through distance learning. A modified and staggered schedule will be employed to reduce the number of people on campus on a daily basis. Students will be assigned to cohort groups and will alternate days on campus.

### Teaching & Learning:

In addition to measures listed in Phase 1,

- All classes will be divided into smaller groups.
- A staggered and modified schedule will be used to limit the number of people on campus.
- When not on campus, students will learn from AGS teachers through distance learning.



### Afterschool Programs & Community Events:

- Any school events or programs for groups of 10+ people will be cancelled, modified, or held virtually.
- Athletic programs will be suspended or modified to meet social distance requirements.
- Aftercare will be available but will require pre-registration so we can accommodate for space and supervision. Before care will not be available. Details on pick up and drop-off protocols will be shared closer to the start of school.
- Guests to campus will not be allowed.

## SCENARIO 3: DISTANCE LEARNING

**Under this scenario, COVID-19 is at high risk to our community.**

Under our Distance Learning model, students will receive a blend of asynchronous (teacher directed but student led) and synchronous (live class) instruction to allow for a well-balanced and engaging online learning experience. The school schedule will be modified as well as community events and non-academic activities and classes.



## DIGITAL PLATFORMS

AGS faculty will utilize various digital platforms and tools including those that are listed below. Teachers will work with students closely to orient them on any technology being used in the classroom.

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Gmail is the platform that AGS uses for email and calendaring. Every student has an AGS email account that is accessed through Gmail.
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Zoom is a video conferencing platform that can be used to provide live virtual class meeting space.
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Blackbaud is the learning management system used by AGS where AGS families can access course syllabus, assignments, grades, announcements, and much more.
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Flipgrid is a digital grid that allows teachers to facilitate video discussions with students. Students display their work on flipgrid allowing classmates to reflect on each other's work and create a "web" of discussion.
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Nearpod is a student engagement platform that allows teachers to create highly engaging and interactive presentations.
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Google Classroom is a tool that helps students manage their work, discussions, and assignments.

**Based on the recommendations and research from medical professionals, scientists, and government officials on mitigating the risk of contracting and spreading the COVID-19 virus, AGS will implement the following guidelines:**

- Frequently cleaning and disinfecting the entire campus during the school day in addition to nightly cleaning.
- Employing tests/health screenings for students, faculty, and staff before entering the building, if necessary.
- Adding hand sanitizing stations to every entrance.
- Separating desks with a 6 feet radius while also utilizing common and outdoor spaces for instruction while social distancing.
- Training students and employees with best practices in social distancing and hygiene. Signs will be posted to help remind students.
- Limiting visitors and guests to campus.
- Limiting or closing common spaces for recreational use.
- Allowing for lunch and snacks to be consumed in assigned classrooms only. The AGS lunch program and Aggies will be suspended.
- Requiring employees and students who test positive for COVID-19 to quarantine for a period of time. This may extend to employees and students who are symptomatic of COVID-19 or have exposure to someone who is positive or symptomatic for COVID-19.

**The following guidelines are required for students, employees, and visitors to mitigate the risk and spread of COVID-19 when on campus:**



**Use masks while on campus.**



**Practice social distancing of 6 feet at all times.**



**Avoid sharing of materials, resources, and supplies.**



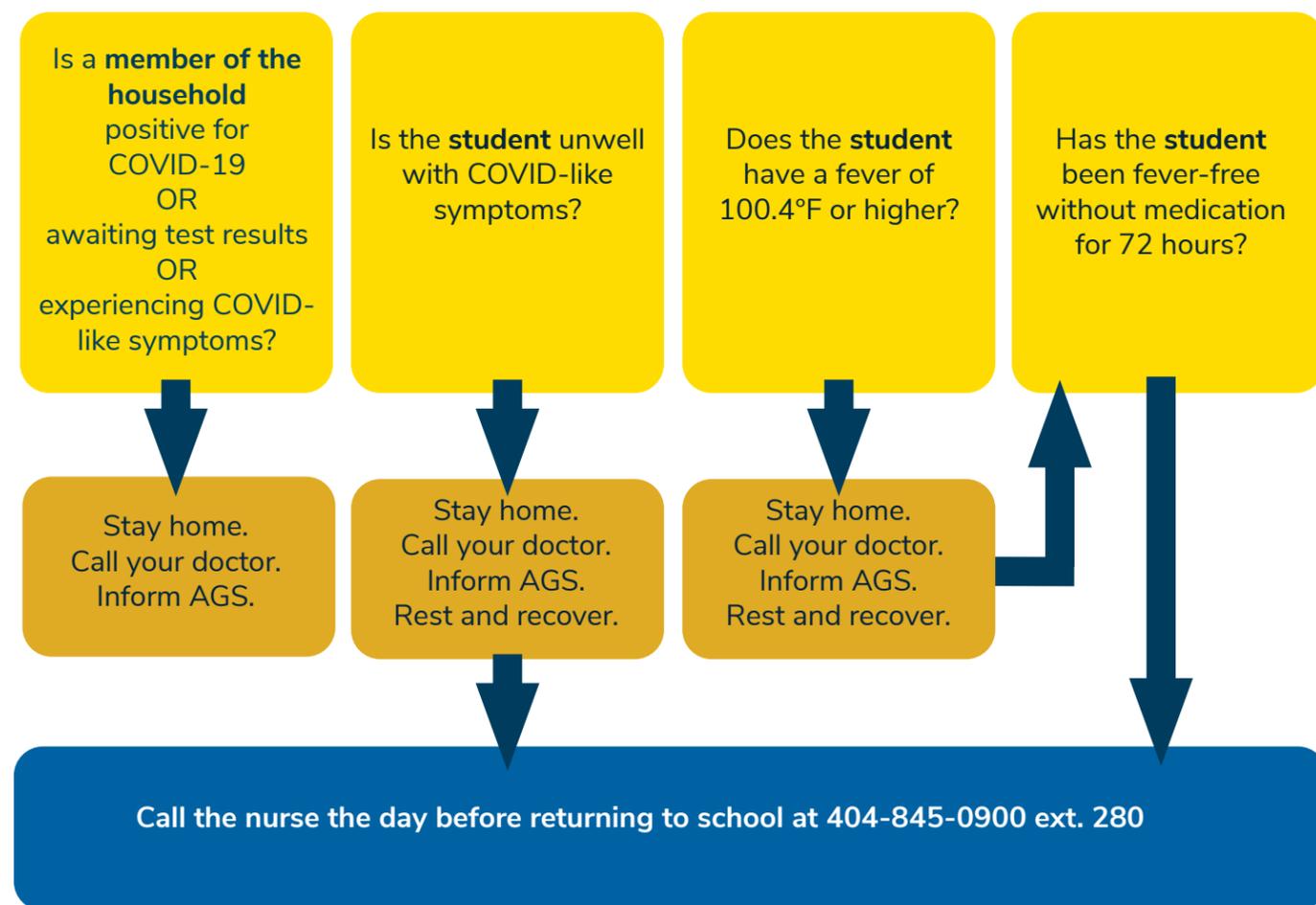
**Wash and sanitize hands frequently.**



**Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms or feeling sick.**

## DECIDING WHEN TO STAY HOME

Families agreeing and knowing when to keep their students home from school is a very important part of keeping our campus healthy. We have outlined key protocols to help families determine when a student should stay home.



## AGS INFIRMARY GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19

These guidelines have been established to protect students, children, and staff from the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

### Nurse will:

- Use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people.
- Continue routine best practices of encouraging vaccines, hand-washing, face coverings at all times, environmental cleaning, and self-isolation when sick.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection.
- Notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality.
- Inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow state DPH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate state DPH guidance for home quarantine.

### Faculty, Staff, and Students will:

- Wear face masks to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
- If exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, will go home. They will be isolated before family pick-up and will continue to wear a mask. They will not return to school until they have met state DPH criteria to discontinue home isolation.

### Parents will:

- Wear a face mask at all times when entering the building.
- Ensure a quick pick up if their student is exhibiting symptoms and needs to go home.
- Call their primary care physician for guidance related to their student's symptoms.
- Keep the school informed about any diagnosis of COVID-19.
- For more information, please visit: [www.dph.georgia.gov/contact](http://www.dph.georgia.gov/contact) and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

### Health and Wellness Pledge



All families must commit to supporting AGS's health, wellness and safety protocols and must agree to keep students home when they are not feeling well, have COVID-like symptoms or have potentially been exposed. Each family will be required to complete the AGS Health and Wellness Pledge, which will be made available through Blackbaud in August and must be completed with the other medical documents required for the start of school.