PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Atlanta Girls' School has developed a plan to prepare for and respond to a threat of influenza or other pandemic viruses. Our priority is to keep the students, faculty, and staff healthy and safe in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak, and to assure the community that we have taken the necessary precautions so that our students are protected. The purpose of this plan is to address the following issues related to a pandemic:

- Ensuring a culture of infection control that is reinforced during the annual flu season or other appropriate times.

- Establishing a plan if public health officials declare a pandemic in our area.

The first step in our preparedness plan is **prevention**. Atlanta Girls' School administrators and the School Nurse promote the daily practice of everyday prevention strategies at all times. Our recommendations are based on the CDC guidelines. The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. Vaccinating can reduce the number of flu illnesses, doctor's visits, and missed school days due to flu illnesses as well as flu-related hospitalizations.
The CDC also recommends practicing good health habits or everyday preventive actions (nonpharmaceutical interventions) that include the following:

- Students, faculty, and staff must stay home for at least 24 hours after fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue with immediate disposal into a trash can.
- Frequent hand-washing for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before eating or after coughing and sneezing. If soap and water are unavailable, using at least 60% alcohol-based sanitizer is acceptable.
- Refraining from touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as they are gateways to infection.
- Cleaning surfaces to remove germs from frequently touched objects such as desks, chairs, computers and bathrooms.

A flu pandemic occurs when a new flu virus (i.e. novel coronavirus) that is different from the seasonal flu emerges and spreads quickly and worldwide. Because there is no vaccination available for this virus, the use of non pharmaceutical interventions are the best way to help slow its spread. If public health officials declare a pandemic, the second step is to implement our **action plan**. The following takes place:

- Sick students, faculty, and staff who do not have an immediate ride home will be isolated to the infirmary area and will be required to wear a disposable face mask.
- Cancelling or postponing large school events or trips.
- Allowing students and staff to stay home if someone in the household is sick with the flu.
- Closing the school before the flu becomes widespread to help slow the spread of the disease in the community. During school closures, teachers will be prepared to ensure remote learning takes place. This will vary by course and will require that students have access to the internet from home.