



New Day *new way*

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



New Day
new way



Some things never change.



ATLANTA
GIRLS'
SCHOOL

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ayanna L. Hill-Gill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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.

Preparing for a New Way

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.



On-Campus & Hybrid Learning

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.



New Day
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	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00	MS on campus, US remote (Zoom)		Teachers and students remote	MS remote (Zoom)
	Drop off ends at 8:20		Deep cleaning of campus	Drop off
9:00	A 8:30-9:40	C 8:30-9:40	Asynchronous learning	A 8:30-9:40
	15 min break	15 min break		15 min break
10:00	B 9:55-11:05	D 9:55-11:05	Clubs 10:15-10:45	B 9:55-11:05
11:00	15 min break	15 min break	Community Time 11:00-12:00	15 min break
	Advisory 11:20-11:45	Office Hours (from advisory if on campus)		Advisory 11:20-11:45
12:00	Lunch with Advisory 11:50-12:10		Asynchronous learning	Lunch with Ad
	15 min break	15 min break		15 min break
1:00	E 12:25-1:35	G 12:25-1:35		E 12:25-1:35
	15 min break	15 min break	15 min break	
2:00	F 1:50-3:00	Community Time 1:50-3:00		F 1:50-3:00
3:00				



HYBRID SCHEDULE
Fall Semester
2020–2021



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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.



DISTANCE LEARNING

FACULTY PREPARED FOR A NEW WAY

Last spring, AGS transitioned from a face-to-face on-campus experience into a full virtual experience within a week. While it was not ideal, we not only survived but also thrived in this transition. This was due to our leaders providing clear guidelines and expectations allowing us to pivot and adapt seamlessly while giving voice to all teachers. A new Distance Learning Team, quickly formed by faculty, led the transition with a wealth of knowledge, research, and experience on virtual instruction. Faculty members were flexible, adaptive to new circumstances, and open to learning how to make virtual instruction meaningful. Students, although preferring face-to-face instruction, modeled resilience and compassion while remaining committed to school regardless of the format. And families through their patience, flexibility and unwavering commitment provided tremendous support while we navigated uncharted territory.

With a new school year ahead of us filled with uncertainty around COVID-19, the AGS faculty and staff engaged in professional development provided by [One Schoolhouse](#) throughout the summer to enhance our ability to deliver instruction virtually or in a hybrid learning environment.



- The Distance Learning Team completed a course called “Academic Leadership for Hybrid Learning Design.” The purpose of this course was to prepare for the various scenarios that might exist in the 2020 -2021 school year. It also assisted teachers in designing more effective and intentional virtual lessons.
- All faculty members and several staff members completed a course called “Designing, Building and Teaching for Hybrid Learning.” The course was designed to help teachers create lessons that can be delivered online or in-person all while maintaining core AGS values and norms.



All faculty and staff members participated in a task force (see page 4 for a list of sub-committees) that served as a think tank to prepare our plan for re-opening school. The plan reflects the knowledge and skills acquired by our faculty and staff from these One Schoolhouse summer courses.

The dedication and commitment of our AGS faculty and staff to the school’s mission of “Inspiring Girls to Lead Lives of Purpose” was evident in their willingness to forgo a typical summer break to focus attention on preparing to start the school year in a new way.



Distance Learning

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.



Gmail

Gmail is the platform that AGS uses for email and calendaring. Every student has an AGS email account that is accessed through Gmail.



Zoom

Zoom is a video conferencing platform that can be used to provide live virtual class meeting space.

blackbaud

Blackbaud is the learning management system used by AGS where AGS families can access course syllabus, assignments, grades, announcements, and much more.

Flipgrid

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.



nearpod

Nearpod is a student engagement platform that allows teachers to create highly engaging and interactive presentations.



Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a tool that helps students manage their work, discussions, and assignments.



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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.

Health & Safety Guidelines and Plans

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.

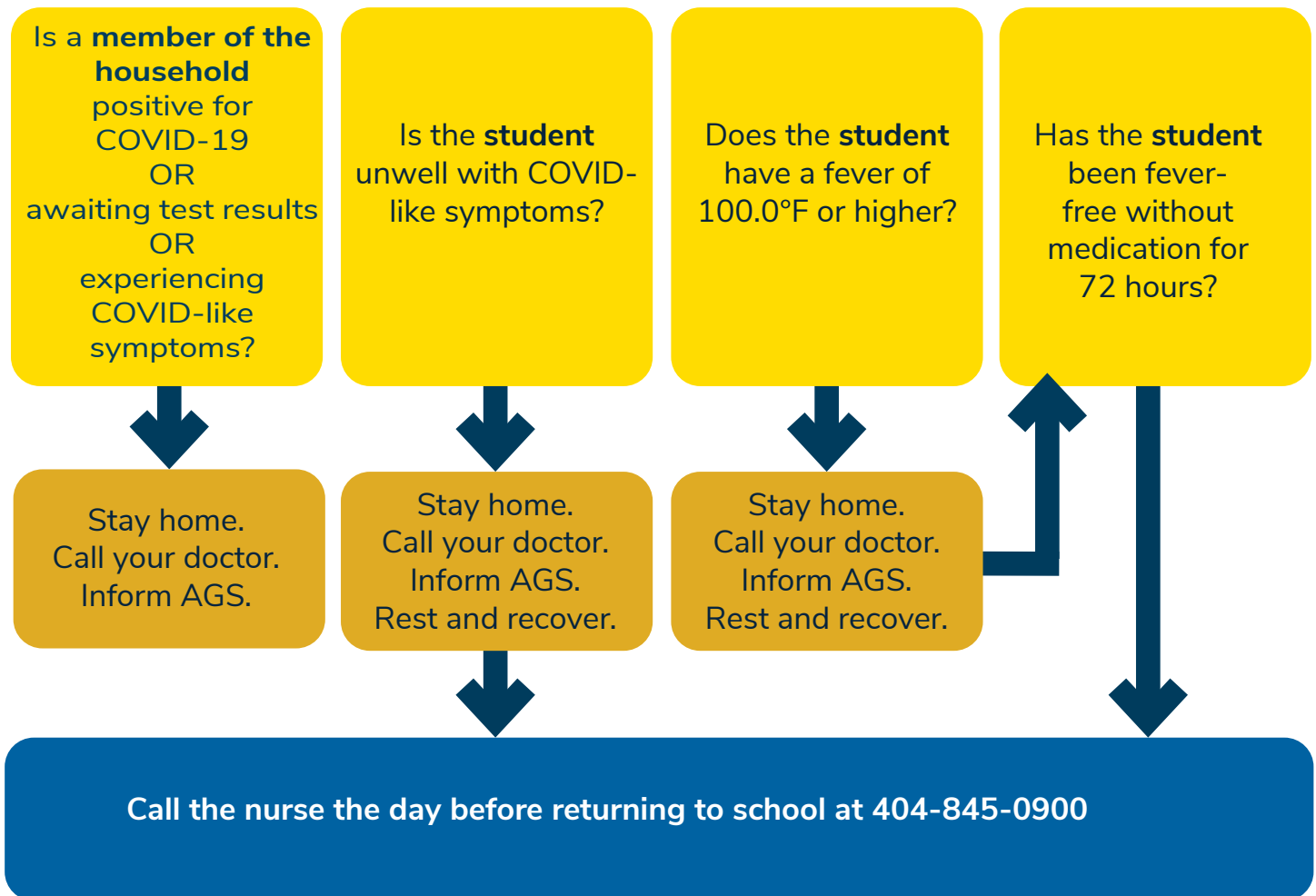


Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms or feeling sick.



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.



Health & Wellness

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 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.



To help promote the health and safety of the entire school community, all positive cases of COVID-19 should be reported to the School. Positive cases in students or parents should be reported to the student's division head and school nurse: Krista Parker and Monique Rodriguez. Faculty and staff should report positive cases to their respective supervisor. An internal reporting structure has been put in place to ensure confidentiality, and the School's nurse will follow up with individuals reporting a positive case. Individuals will be notified of possible exposure to illness and/or cases of COVID-19 should they or their student(s) be impacted. At times, students and/or faculty may be requested to remain at home if we believe there has been close contact/exposure with a symptomatic person awaiting COVID-19 test results. Only those AGS community members who were in close contact (exposed) with the infected individual will be informed, NOT the entire school or campus community. Due to health privacy considerations, the names of those who test positive or are exposed to COVID-19 must be kept confidential.

Should AGS or Georgia Department of Health determine that any of our campus needs to dismiss early or close temporarily due to COVID-19 cases, families will be notified via our emergency notification system and distance learning will go into effect. It is our expectation that any infected and exposed individuals will be treated with respect, dignity and compassion, consistent with AGS' values and appreciation for the individuals who create our sense of community. To avoid rumors and speculation, AGS will only act on positive cases when an individual or family contacts the School, division head or nurse, directly. We will not investigate rumors, anonymous tips or secondhand information, so please do not share "what you've heard" with the School or other community members. As a community, it is critical that we all follow the guidelines laid out for reporting, screening and mitigation.

Communication Policy for Positive COVID Test

Georgia Department of Health (GDH), Contact Tracing and School Closure:

Atlanta Girls' School will partner closely with the Department of Health for key indicators and decisions regarding closures, contact tracing and protocols. If a member of the School community has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the School Nurse will promptly contact the Georgia Department of Health for further guidance and assistance with contact tracing. In these situations, the School may be required to exclude certain individuals who may have been in contact with COVID-19 or in widespread cases, close parts of campus for a temporary period of time. Based on the mitigation strategies that AGS has implemented, the GDH has indicated that the risk of exposure is minimized and that each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the School.

Family/student notifies the following individuals about a positive test result:

Krista Parker, Director of Upper and Middle School
(kparker@atlantagirlsschool.org)

Notifies students and AGS employees that may be impacted via email. Names of individuals impacted by Covid will be kept confidential.

Monique Rodriguez, RN,
School Nurse
(mrodriguez@atlantagirlsschool.org)

Follows up with family and student.

Contacts Georgia Department of Health for guidance and assistance with contract tracing.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Will there be a virtual option for students who need to stay home for health reasons or do not feel comfortable returning to school physically?

We understand and anticipate some families will not be able to commit to in-person instruction whether we are in Scenario 1 or Scenario 2. We have invested in setting up technology in our classrooms that will allow students to equitably engage in class through live stream. We understand that the needs and comfort of our families may vary, and that for a variety of reasons, some will need to participate remotely for an undefined time period.

Is there a specific type of face covering that I should wear?

All visitors are required to wear a cloth mask or similar while on campus. The following masks are acceptable:

- * Washable cloth face mask, including neoprene masks
- * Single-use, disposable surgical, medical, or dust masks
- * Double layered gaiters made of cotton
- * Respirator masks

Please note that face shields or bandanas may not be used as substitutes for masks and that masks must be properly worn over the nose and mouth.

How will proper physical distancing be regulated in hallways and other communal spaces?

To ensure physical distancing of minimum 6 feet, hallways and stairwells will be marked as one way passageways. Floors and hallways will be taped and marked to remind students what direction and side of hallways to use. Signs will be posted to remind students to practice physical distance, while some furniture will be removed to give students more

space to distance themselves. Classroom and communal spaces are being measured and re-configured to determine the best layout and arrangement of furniture to allow students to distance themselves.

Are students required to wear AGS uniform?

For this semester, students are not required to dress in AGS uniform but may choose to do so. For students choosing to dress in casual clothing, they are required to follow the guidelines and expectations described in our community handbook. For P.E., students are required to come to school dressed appropriately for P.E. as students will not be permitted to change dress while on campus. Since outdoor spaces will be utilized as much as possible, we request that students come to school dressed appropriately for weather.

Are students allowed to use their lockers during the school day?

Per CDC guidelines, students will not be permitted to use lockers or cubby space in classrooms. Students should come to school prepared with only items essential to their school day.

What is the procedure for entering the school in the morning during drop-off?

Students should enter the building using the main entrance and expect to get their temperature checked and health screened by the school nurse before admittance. While school officially starts at 8:30 a.m. each day, the building will open at 7:45 for students and visitors. For students that arrive late to school, they should wait by the second front entrance (by the steps) for screening by the nurse before entering the building. They can email the nurse or use the call button to reach the nurse. After they are screened, they can return to the main entrance and front desk to sign in.



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What health screening questions will be asked during drop-off?

Students will be asked if they know of being exposed in the last two weeks, including living within or being within 6 feet of anyone who is ill. They will also be asked if they are experiencing cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell and/or taste, muscle pain, chills, headache, sore throat, and any other symptoms in the last 48 hours, including their last dose of Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Advil, or Ibuprofen, and fever of 100.0 or above.

How will students be dismissed from school at the end of the day?

Dismissal will be staggered using our P.A. system based on hallways and classrooms in use. Students are expected to exit the building when they are dismissed.

Will students be allowed to use microwaves that are available in classrooms and dining rooms?

Students will not be allowed to use microwaves at school per CDC guidelines. We encourage students to bring lunches and snacks that do not have to be warmed up.

What metrics will AGS use to determine a change in scenarios and plans?

We will use a combination of factors and metrics to decide if we need to move into any of our scenarios, including closing the school. While our decision may or may not align with other schools, we will consider government/state mandates, student and/or faculty absenteeism that prohibit us from executing our mission in person, high risk of school/local/state spread of the disease, and guidelines provided by the CDC and local and state health officials.

FAQ's

How does our student return to school in the Hybrid Learning model if she starts out virtual?

We ask that families notify our front desk (frontdesk@atlantagirlsschool.org) if your student will be attending school virtually before the start of the school day. When your student plans to attend school in person, she can show up to school and attend her class in person. Teachers will be sure to mark her attendance as in person.

How will the AGS community know if someone has tested positive for COVID-19?

Families are required to notify the school nurse about any diagnosis of COVID-19. AGS will immediately notify families whose daughter may have been exposed via email.

What will distance learning look like for a student when in-person classes are in session?

If a student decides to attend an in-person class virtually (under the Hybrid Learning model), she will join her class at the designated meeting time via zoom. Classrooms will be equipped with an Swivl and Pivo camera that will give students an immersive learning experience while attending virtually.

Will AGS notify all parents if anyone (not only a member in a particular cohort) in the school is infected by COVID-19?

Per our communication policy on page 19, only those AGS community members who were in close contact (exposed) with the infected individual will be informed, not the entire school or campus community.



Are teachers being tested for COVID-19? If so, at what frequency?

Teachers and students are not required to be tested for COVID-19 unless they have been exposed to COVID-19 or exhibiting symptoms. CDC does not currently recommend universal testing.

Should AGS students be tested for COVID-19, and if so how frequently?

The CDC recommendation is to get your student tested when there is possible exposure or when the student is exhibiting symptoms.

How does AGS define exposure or “close contact” to COVID-19?

Per CDC guidelines, a close contact, per CDC guidelines, is defined as anyone that was within six feet of an infected person, with or without a mask, for fifteen minutes or more. If you take care of someone in your home who is COVID-19 positive, you had direct physical contact through kissing or hugging, you shared eating or drinking utensils, or if a person who is COVID-19 positive sneezed or coughed on you, you are considered a close contact. If you were a close contact with someone who tested positive with Covid-19, you must quarantine as follows:

- Stay home or quarantine yourself for fourteen days after your last contact with that person.
- Try to avoid contact with others and wear a mask if you have to be around others in the household.
- Monitor for symptoms such as fever of 100 or greater, cough, or other COVID-like symptoms.

*Testing is advised for individuals who are deemed a close contact and must quarantine for 14 days regardless of your test results. If you develop symptoms during your 14-day quarantine, you will definitely need to get a Covid test. At that point, you are considered to be in isolation

Is AGS planning to deploy air purifiers in each classroom and common areas? How do they work?

Yes, AGS classrooms and common areas are equipped with air purifiers installed in HVAC units. The air purifiers being installed are Global Plasma Solutions bi-polar ionization units. Every HVAC unit on campus will be equipped with one of these ionization units which ionizes the air to kill bacteria and viruses before being blown back into the room.