



Question and Answer: How Does LCPS Manage the Flu?

1. What is the flu?

From www.flufacts.com:

“The flu, more scientifically known as influenza, is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. The influenza virus usually enters the body through mucus membranes in the mouth, nose or eyes. When a person with the flu coughs or sneezes, the virus then becomes airborne and can be inhaled by anyone nearby. You can also get the flu if you’ve touched a contaminated surface like a telephone or door knob, and then touch your nose or mouth. Generally, flu season is October thru May, although that will vary from year to year and region to region.

2. Does LCPS determine if a student has the flu or what strain of flu he or she may have?

No, the school district does not make that determination. School nurses do note the symptoms of students they examine, but a child’s illness will be determined by the family’s physician or, in some cases, the New Mexico Department of Health.

3. What does Las Cruces Public Schools do on a daily basis to prevent the spread of flu and communicable diseases?

The school district has a number of protocols in place to deal with student illnesses and to help prevent them from spreading at school. These include:

- a) All schools are supplied with cleaning materials that are effective in killing flu germs and other viruses.
- b) Custodians and Nutrition Services Department employees have been instructed in the proper use of these cleaning materials. This includes the wiping down of all surfaces and objects that are regularly touched, including counter tops, desks, computer keyboards, doorknobs, sink faucets and handles, toilet flush handles, etc.
- c) **The school provides information about and training on techniques to prevent the spread of germs at school and elsewhere, including:**
 - **Proper hand washing**
 - **How to cough or sneeze to prevent the spread of germs;**
 - **Keeping children home from school when they are sick.**

4. Is a flu vaccine available?

Yes, a flu vaccine is widely available in this community. Check with your health care provider or the New Mexico Department of Health. For quick and easy reference to the nearest flu shot clinic available to you, call the New Mexico Vaccine and Flu Hotline at 1.866.681.5872.

5. Does LCPS monitor student absences due to illness during flu season?

Yes. The school district uses its Electronic Student Information System to track absences at every school in the district on a daily basis. It monitors student absences, particularly during flu season, to determine if there is a noticeable increase in student absences at a particular school or schools that may be related to illness. LCPS also regularly receives information provided by the National Centers for Disease Control and the New Mexico Department of Health on outbreaks and suspected outbreaks of flu and other illnesses locally, in the state, regionally and nationally.



6. What happens if a large number of students is diagnosed with some strain of flu?

The student's school, working closely with the LCPS Department of Health Services and the superintendent's office, and following instructions from the New Mexico Department of Health, may take a number of steps, including, but not limited to:

- a) Notifying the parents of all students in the school, via a letter sent home with students, email (including: Synergy Parent Portal), telephone message, and the school district website and the individual school's website;
- b) Conducting, as necessary, a deep cleaning of all or portions of the school;
- c) Providing increased information and training on techniques to prevent the spread of flu germs;
- d) If deemed appropriate, the superintendent's office might notify local news media about the situation to better inform the entire community.

7. Would LCPS ever close a school or schools because of the presence of a flu virus?

This would be done only after LCPS received a directive from the New Mexico Public Education Department, in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Health.

8. Where can I get more information?

Las Cruces Public Schools

Visit www.lcps.k12.nm.us.

Call your school nurse, or call the LCPS Health Services Department at 527.5884.

New Mexico Department of Health

Visit www.health.state.nm.us.
528.5000

National Centers for Disease Control

Visit www.cdc.gov/nchs and www.cdc.gov/vaccines

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Know the Flu F.A.C.T.S.

F- fever

A- aches

C- chills

T- tiredness

S- sudden onset