

New Trier-area officials: Flu not hitting local elementary schools — for now

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New Trier-area elementary schools appear to have dodged the [influenza](#) bullet — at least for now, according to local school officials.

That's despite Illinois' status as one of 32 states experiencing high reports of influenza-like illness during the current flu season, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"While we are aware of the increase in flu cases, here in District 39 we have not seen any significant related absences at this point," Wilmette District 39 Superintendent Raymond Lechner said in an email. Officials in the K-8 district, which enrolls roughly 3,665 students in six schools, are continuing to emphasize good health habits such as washing hands and staying home when sick, he said.

Officials at Winnetka Public Schools District 36 said they haven't had reports of abnormally high absences during the current flu season. The district, which serves about 1,560 kindergarten through eighth grade students at five schools, considers that to run from October through May, said Kate Hughes, the district's communications coordinator.

"At this time we're not seeing much of a difference versus last year, but flu season is still in full swing," District 36 nurse Jeanne McCullough said in an email.

Catherine Wang, superintendent of Glencoe District 35, said in an email that the three-school elementary district has not seen a large increase in absences among its roughly 1,275 students. Parents calling the district's absence phone line have reported flu-like symptoms, she said, but "we have only been told a few were confirmed by doctors."

Wang and Edward Stange, superintendent of Sunset Ridge School District 29 in Northfield, both said they are making sure students and staff are reminded of preventative health measures to take at school and at home.

Stange said the two-school K-8 district is running with a 2 to 3 percent absence rate among its roughly 500 students.

"For this time of year, that's normal for us. There are about six kids whose parents think it might be the flu," he said.

In Avoca School District 37, officials at the district's two schools aren't reporting any unusual absences among roughly 750 students, Superintendent Kevin Jauch said.

"Knock on wood, our students are holding out," he said.

According to the CDC, influenza symptoms include fever and chills, fatigue, cough or chest discomfort, headaches and muscle or body aches. Less common are sneezing, runny or stuffy noses, and some may also experience vomiting and diarrhea, according to its website.

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