

**Board of Education**  
Inez Rodriguez President  
Dr. Alan W. Garrett Vice President  
Randy Rankin Secretary  
Rod Savage Member  
Antonio R. Sanchez, Jr. Member

# Portales Municipal Schools

501 S. Abilene

Portales, NM 88130

Phone: 575.356.7000 Fax: 575.356.4377

[www.portaleschools.com](http://www.portaleschools.com)

**Administration**  
Johnnie S. Cain Superintendent  
Henry Montañó Asst. Supt. of Instruction  
Rick Segovia Dir. of Federal Programs  
Cheryl Aguilar Dir. of Special Student Services  
Sarah Stubbs Dir. of Finance  
Shaunna Smith Dir. of Student Nutrition  
Nat Gomez Dir. of Maintenance



Dear Parents and Guardians,

This letter is to provide information about procedures Portales Municipal Schools is planning in regards to COVID-19, otherwise known as coronavirus. We take the health of our students and staff very seriously.

You are likely aware of the outbreak of COVID-19 in China and the subsequent confirmed cases in the United States and other countries around the world. It is important to know that the World Health Organization has not yet declared COVID-19 a pandemic; however, PMSD encourages families and staff to remain cautious and aware of the status of this virus.

There is currently no cause for concern at the schools, but we will keep you informed if that should change. To be proactive, PMSD will continue, as always, to work closely with the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) to ensure that we have an effective preparedness and management system in place. In the event that the virus poses a serious threat to the students and staff at school, PMSD will follow the NMDOH guidelines. We will inform you of any recommendations that might cause any disruption to our schools or any new safety information they might provide to help you and your family lessen the chance of contracting coronavirus or the flu.

As a matter of caution, PMSD will provide teachers and staff throughout the district additional disinfectant supplies for their classrooms. Custodians will disinfect areas where students congregate more often. They will also do a deeper cleaning and disinfect classrooms and common areas more often than usual.

According to the New Mexico Department of Health, the **flu** at this time remains a more significant concern in the state than coronavirus. In order to protect you and your family, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting a flu vaccine and taking preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, such as using proper handwashing techniques and teaching children to cover coughs and sneezes. If your child is running a fever or sick, please do not send him or her to school. We are also requesting that any staff who are running a fever or exhibits any signs or symptoms of the flu to stay home. As CDC noted, it recommends the same preventive measures for coronavirus. Portales Municipal Schools does have flu vaccine on hand should you wish to have your child vaccinated.

If you, your child, or family has recently traveled to China, Japan, South Korea, Italy or other foreign countries, we also ask that you take extra precautions and seek a medical evaluation from your doctor before returning to school.

The following resources are also available with information on COVID-19:

New Mexico Department of Health: <https://nmhealth.org/news/awareness/2020/2/?view=835>

New Mexico Department of Health - Coronavirus 2019: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

Centers for Disease Control: Hand Washing:

**<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>**

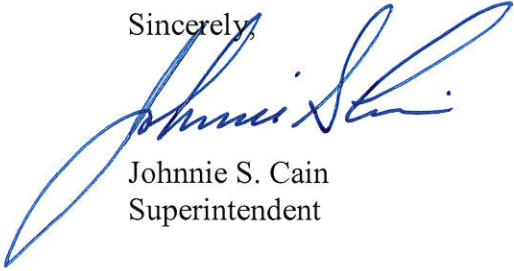
U.S. Department of State China Travel Advisory:

**<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/china-travel-advisory.html>**

World Health Organization, Coronavirus: **<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>**

If you have any questions, please call Laura Massey RN at (575) 356-6013,  
lmassey@portalesschools.com , your school nurse, or Central Office at (575)356-7000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Johnnie S. Cain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Johnnie S. Cain  
Superintendent

## Flu – not coronavirus - continues to be the illness to worry about

February 20, 2020

---

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) warns residents flu remains a more significant illness to be concerned about in the state than novel coronavirus.

The Department of Health continues to monitor and respond to both the annual flu season and the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. There remains no case of the coronavirus in the state. Flu and respiratory virus season, however, continues with many cases still being reported at New Mexico's clinics and hospitals.

*“Coronavirus still needs to be cause for heightened awareness for medical providers, but flu and respiratory illnesses needs to be the focus for residents,”* said NMDOH Cabinet Secretary Kathy Kunkel. *“Flu is the more pressing health risk in our state right now.”*

Nationally, flu cases are increasing while in New Mexico we are still in the middle of the influenza season. The best way still to avoid flu and flu-related illness is to get the flu vaccination every year and practice common sense habits like washing your hands frequently and covering your mouth when you're sick and have to cough.

The Department of Health continues to ask any persons returning from China to call our 24/7/365 *“Epidemiology Hotline”* at 505-827-0006 for guidance on how to protect yourself and your community from the novel coronavirus, even if you are not sick. Healthcare professionals who suspect COVID-19 should immediately notify infection control personnel at their facility and contact NMDOH at that same hotline number.

Information for coronavirus is being updated often. Please consult the CDC website on 2019-nCoV for the most up to date information.

Also, check with your health care provider about flu vaccines. Even if you've already had the flu this season, getting a flu shot can still help prevent getting sick again with another strain. To find out more about flu vaccination clinics throughout New Mexico, you can go to HealthMap Vaccine Finder or go to the NMDOH website: <http://nmhealth.org/about/phd/idb/imp/flu/>.