



NEW YORK AND VIRGINIA DDESS  
Superintendent's Office  
3308 John Quick Road  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-1702

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

October 23, 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is to provide information regarding staph infections, especially MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus*). Recently, many schools locally and throughout the nation are dealing with this issue. To date, Quantico schools have **NO** reported cases of the MRSA staph infections. We are following proactive steps to prevent MRSA in our schools in accordance with the VA Dept of Health and the CDC recommendations for proper disinfection.

*Staphylococcus Aureus* ("staph") infections have been around for a long time. MRSA is a form of staph infection that does NOT respond to routine treatment with commonly used antibiotics, although other antibiotics are effective. With many effective treatments available, the MRSA-related death of a student this week emphasizes the importance of raising awareness and preventing infection. **MRSA is preventable and treatable.** Staph bacteria (including MRSA) is most often spread from person to person through direct skin-to-skin contact with contaminated items (such as clothes, towels, toys, athletic equipment, bandages). It is NOT spread through the air. The MRSA bacteria are capable of living on a surface for 24 hours. The bacteria may live in people's noses or on their skin and usually does not cause *disease* unless it enters an opening in the skin.

Symptoms of MRSA or staph infections depend on where the infection is located. Infections of the skin are the most common. They may appear as a pimple or boil, can be red, swollen, painful, and warm to the touch, and have pus or other drainage. They may also appear as a wound that does not heal. More serious infections can develop in the bloodstream, lungs, bladder and other sites.

**The main way to prevent MRSA/staph infections is to wash hands frequently with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.** Other ways to prevent MRSA or other staph infection include:

- ❖ keeping cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a clean dry bandage until they have healed
- ❖ avoid sharing personal items such as towels, sports uniforms/equipment, & clothing
- ❖ shower with soap and warm water directly after contact sports, be sure to wash uniforms and towels with hot water and detergent after each use and allow items to hang dry completely if unable to be dried on high heat
- ❖ seek medical treatment if a sore or cut becomes red, oozes, painful or isn't healing

It is of the utmost importance to contact your physician for evaluation and treatment if your child is presenting with any of the above symptoms or if you have any concerns about your child's health. Please report any diagnosed or suspected infectious conditions to your child's school nurse.

Further information about MRSA can be found on the following websites:

[www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html).

[http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/infections/bacterial\\_viral/staph.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/infections/bacterial_viral/staph.html)

Please feel free to contact your school nurse or building administrator if you have any further questions or concerns.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
Michael A. Gould  
District Superintendent