



ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
of ADMINISTRATION

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

As many of you are aware, there have been several recent reports about a type of *staph* infection, called *Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus* ("MRSA"), in schools in our area. This letter is to provide an overview of the steps that are being taken in the Roanoke County Public Schools to prevent a MRSA outbreak.

MRSA is a serious public health concern because it is resistant to the antibiotics that are generally used to treat *Staph* infections. MRSA causes boils and skin infections; the infected area usually starts out as a small bump that resembles a pimple, which becomes redder and often develops drainage, swelling, tenderness, and warmth to the touch. If MRSA is diagnosed promptly, most infections can be treated successfully.

The Roanoke County Public School system is taking the following actions to prevent MRSA:

- Since proper hygiene is the single best way to prevent the spread of MRSA, we are cleaning our buses and schools – classrooms, restrooms, athletic facilities, and cafeterias regularly with an EPA approved antimicrobial. In light of the recent MRSA outbreaks in other school divisions, these cleaning protocols are being reinforced with our custodial staff.
- Good hygiene measures are routinely reinforced with the general student population and will continue to be reviewed with athletes on an ongoing basis.
- Coaches are monitoring the laundering of game uniforms and practice attire and are encouraging showers after games and practices.
- Waterless hand sanitizers are available in all locker rooms at the secondary level.

In the event we do have a confirmed MRSA outbreak, the following will be our protocol:

- We will report the case promptly to the Roanoke County Health Department.
- Any students who are confirmed to have MRSA will be permitted to attend classes only if they have been cleared to do so, in writing, by their physician. Affected skin areas must be covered with an appropriate bandage at all times.
- Athletes who are confirmed to have MRSA will not be allowed to play until they have been cleared to do so, in writing, by their physician.

If your child displays symptoms consistent with MRSA, or if you have a concern about your child's health, please contact their health care provider.

If your child is diagnosed to have or is suspected of having an infectious condition, it is important that you report this to their school nurse. You should also notify your child's coach if she/he participates in sports.

Please take a moment to review the MRSA Questions and Answers Sheet on the back of this letter, developed by the Virginia Department of Health, which provides additional insight about MRSA and its prevention. This can also be found on the Roanoke County Public Schools website, along with other information from the Department of Education. If you have questions, or require further information, please contact your school nurse or athletic trainer.

Sincerely,

Allen Jounell
Assistant Superintendent of Administration

LaVern Davis
Supervisor of Health Services