

Whitehall-Coplay School District

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October 31, 2007

Dear Parents / Guardians,

We are writing to inform you of a health issue that has received considerable attention in the media and is understandably a concern for students and parents. A number of school systems have reported cases of students with a bacterial infection of the skin that is resistant to the more common forms of antibiotics. The infection is called Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

As of this date, there are no active cases of MRSA in the Whitehall-Coplay School District. In keeping with our practice of full disclosure, be assured we will communicate with you if the current status changes despite the Center for Disease Control (CDC) stating that "it should not be necessary to inform the entire school community." We simply believe that sharing information in a straight forward manner will serve to keep you informed and enable you to help your children practice preventative measures to maintain their health.

Several weeks ago we took preventive measures informing our management / administrative staff and janitorial contractor of the specifics of MRSA and instructed them to focus additional efforts in the cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that may host the bacteria with an EPA registered cleaner disinfectant. In addition, we advised our athletic department that due to the inherent potential for contact in sports, MRSA seems most prevalent in that area.

The CDC states that "MRSA transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as hand hygiene and covering infections." You and your family can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases including MRSA by following good hygiene practices:

- **Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**
- **Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.**
- **Avoid contact with other people's wounds and bandages.**
- **Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, brushes, combs, razors, makeup and cell phones.**

Concern about health situations such as this can cause anxiety for children and family members. As parents and educators, we want to protect our children and ensure their safety. One of the most effective things that we can do is to remain calm and positive. Please monitor your child's feelings and behavior for any signs of anxiety. It is important to note that MRSA is not transmitted by casual contact.

We have placed more detailed information related to MRSA on the district website at www.whitehallcoplay.org.

Thank you in advance for working together with us to see that accurate information is shared and preventative steps are taken. Please be assured that the health and safety of our students and staff as always, remains the utmost importance to all of us.

Sincerely,

John W. Corby
Superintendent of Schools