

September 27, 2011

Dear Parent:

In recent weeks we have experienced a heightened awareness of MRSA, a type of *Staph* infection, among our communities. MRSA is not a new disease, nor is it specific to school settings. Please know there are no confirmed cases of MRSA in the Greenfield-Central Schools. However, in light of the potential for MRSA infection in schools, as well as other types of *Staph* skin infections, we encourage you to talk with your student about preventive measures listed below. School athletes are more at risk for skin breaks and therefore infection, and so at Greenfield-Central Schools we are taking extra steps, currently with the football team, to address this concern and would like to share with you these measures.

We have stepped up our cleaning practices, as we continue to use appropriate EPA-registered disinfectants. We are also providing education to staff and students about the importance of good hygiene, which is one of the best tools in preventing MRSA. For example, washing one's hands at every opportunity using soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, as well as showering immediately after participating in sports activities, are part of the guidelines issued by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

In the event we become aware of an individual affected by MRSA or other type of *Staph* infection at one of our schools, we will try to obtain accurate medical information and follow routine infection control precautions. As a general rule, a student or staff member with a MRSA infection may attend school regularly as long as the wound is covered and he/she is receiving proper treatment.

The CDC and the Indiana Dept. of Health have helpful information about MRSA, some of which is included as follows:

- About 30% of the population carries *Staph aureus* bacteria on the skin or in the nose. Most staph infections are skin infections that are minor and easily treated.
- Methicillin-resistant *Staph aureus* (MRSA) is a type of *Staph aureus* bacteria that had developed resistance to the antibiotic methicillin and usually several other antibiotics. This resistance makes MRSA infections more difficult to treat.
- Although most MRSA infections are localized skin infections, sometimes they can be very serious and difficult to treat if the bacteria get into the blood stream or other body organs.
- Proper prevention at all times can help decrease incidence of MRSA and other *Staph* infections:
  - Practice frequent and appropriate hand hygiene.
  - If an athlete, shower using soap and water and dry with one's own towel after every practice or game/contest.
  - If an athlete, wash athletic clothes after each practice or game/contest.
  - Wash all wounds (e.g., cuts or abrasions) thoroughly with soap and water; keep covered with waterproof bandages.
  - Do not share personal hygiene items such as soap, towels, deodorant, razors, etc.
  - See your health care provider immediately if you notice wounds or skin breaks that are red, swollen, painful, or draining.
  - Take any prescribed antibiotics responsibly.
  - Routinely clean and sanitize areas where there is frequent direct skin contact, such as locker rooms and athletic equipment.

For additional information about MRSA, we encourage you to visit the following websites: [www.cdc.gov/mrsa/prevent/schools.html](http://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/prevent/schools.html), [www.in.gov/isdh/22188.htm](http://www.in.gov/isdh/22188.htm) or [www.mayoclinic.com/health/mrsa/DS00735](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mrsa/DS00735).