



## Lakeview Public Schools

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October 25, 2007

### HEALTH UPDATE

Dear Parent/Guardian of a Lakeview Student,

The health and safety of our students and staff is the highest priority for Lakeview. Recently, several schools around the country have reported instances of student illness that have raised concern among parents. Michigan schools are no exception. Specifically, the Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus bacteria (MRSA) has been identified as a source of potential, serious illness. Over the years, doctors have found this strain of the staph bacteria to be resistant to typical antibiotic treatment. As a result, the local and national media have taken the story and brought it to everyone's attention. The purpose of this communication is to help you understand this bacterial affliction better, and to let you know what Lakeview Public Schools has done to minimize any potential threat to our students and staff.

Staph bacteria is a very common infection afflicting thousands of people in the United States every day. In fact, the Mayo Clinic reports that staph bacteria is carried by about 1/3 of the population who are never sick from being a carrier. Doctors identified strains of MRSA bacteria as long as 40 years ago. It is most commonly identified in hospital environments, although it is a bacteria that is often carried on a person's skin without them knowing it. The most common form of transmission of the bacteria is through person to person touch. Transmission or passing of the bacteria through contact with door handles, desktops or bathroom fixtures is not as common; it does not survive well on these kinds of surfaces.

It is the school district's position that we will sanitize and disinfect surfaces that come in contact with students or staff on a regular basis. For example, all restroom environments are cleaned and sanitized at least every 24 hours. In some cases, when a specific event is scheduled (student assembly, parent/teacher conferences, volleyball game, etc.), a specific local restroom may be cleaned and sanitized more often. Because of recent occurrences of MRSA in the tri-county area, Lakeview took a proactive stance and implemented additional disinfectant and sanitizing measures to make sure we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of any bacteria or viral germs. Since 2005, Lakeview has used a hospital-grade disinfectant, *Quat 5*, produced by *3M*, as our sanitizer/disinfectant. During the week of October 15, all surfaces that come in contact with students, staff, or parents were cleaned with this product. We continue to sanitize high traffic areas (restrooms, door handles, light switches, etc.) on a daily basis. This product has been time-tested as an effective disinfectant and sanitizer for viruses and bacteria, including MRSA.

The best prevention activity is to make sure your child washes their hands with anti-bacterial soap or hand sanitizer on a regular basis. All of Lakeview's restrooms and many individual classroom environments provide students access to these kinds of products. We will continue to work proactively with other local authorities to make sure the health and safety of our students is a priority. If you would like additional information on this subject, review the websites on the reverse side of this page, or feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Karl D. Paulson

Assistant Superintendent

Business Services & Human Resources

#### *Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Education Opportunity*

It is the policy of the Board that no student in this District shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, height, weight, and/or any other legally protected characteristic, be discriminated against, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in its programs and/or activities.

**Summary from MRSA Information  
Center For Disease Control & Macomb County Health Department**

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mrsa/DS00735>

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

<http://www.macombcountymi.gov/publichealth/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAinSchools/#q5>

(see [www.lakeview.misd.net](http://www.lakeview.misd.net) under Operations for additional information).

*The following question and answer document has been developed from the information contained on the health-related websites above.*

**Who gets staph or MRSA infections?**

Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems. These healthcare-associated staph infections include surgical wound infections, urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and pneumonia. *Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as "staph," are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25% to 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as pimples and boils) and can be treated without antibiotics (also known as antimicrobials or antibacterials).

**What does a staph or MRSA infection look like?**

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

**Are staph and MRSA infections treatable?**

Yes. Most staph and MRSA infections are treatable with antibiotics. If you are given an antibiotic, take all of the doses, even if the infection is getting better, unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it. Do not share antibiotics with other people or save unfinished antibiotics to use at another time.

**Should schools close because of an MRSA infection?**

The decision to close a school for any communicable disease should be made by school officials in consultation with local and/or state public health officials. However, in most cases, it is not necessary to close schools because of an MRSA infection in a student. It is important to note that MRSA transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as hand hygiene and covering infections.

**Should students with MRSA skin infections be excluded from attending school?**

Unless directed by a physician, students with MRSA infections should not be excluded from attending school. Exclusion from school should be reserved for those with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage and for those who cannot maintain good personal hygiene. Students with active infections should be excluded from activities where skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur (e.g., sports) until their infections are healed.

**How can I prevent staph or MRSA skin infections?**

Practice good hygiene:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
3. Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
4. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

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