

**COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 128**

**Administration Center**

50 North Lakeview Parkway, Suite 101 Vernon Hills, Illinois 60061 (847) 247-4500 FAX (847) 247-4543

Libertyville High School ♦ Vernon Hills High School

**Prentiss G. Lea**  
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**David L. Clough, Ph.D.**  
*Superintendent*

**Yasmine Dada, CPA**  
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March 13, 2008

Dear Parents:

I am writing to inform you that a case of MRSA has been reported at Vernon Hills High School. The individual at VHHS has received medical attention and has been cleared to return to school. This letter contains information regarding MRSA and practical advice for keeping students healthy.

Formally known as Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, MRSA is a form of staph infection that does not respond to routine treatment with commonly used antibiotics. MRSA infections usually begin with a skin infection, and can become serious or fatal if left untreated. While we most often hear of student athletes contracting MRSA, **all students** should take precautions.

District 128 maintenance supervisors have assured us that the cleaning agents already being used in our schools are effective against MRSA. We will continue use of these products, as well as our regular disinfection routines at both of our schools.

Here is some additional information that may be helpful.

**MRSA Facts**

Staphylococcus aureus ("staph") infections have been around for a long time, causing mild to severe illness. MRSA is a kind of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as a "staph infection." MRSA infections may begin 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.

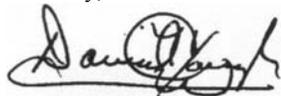
Staph is passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, many healthy people carry the bacteria. The bacteria may live in people's noses and on their skin and most of the time does not cause any problems. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes causes infection. The main ways to prevent staph infection are to wash hands and equipment that comes into direct contact with skin, and care for wounds properly.

**Practical Advice**

- Clean all cuts, abrasions or scrapes on the skin and cover with a bandage until healed.
- Seek medical attention if a sore or cut becomes larger, red, oozes, causes pain or is not healing.
- Shower with soap after physical activity.
- Family members with dry skin should use a moisturizer to prevent cracking.
- Urge children and adults to wash their hands regularly.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors or clothing.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or material contaminated from wounds.
- Children and adults who participate in sporting events should wash their hands after each practice or game. Wash uniforms and towels with hot water and detergent after each use.
- Athletes should be urged to air out their gym bags, as that can be a breeding ground for bacteria.

If your child has or had a MRSA infection, please inform the school nurse. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact either of our school nurses, **Veronica Alshouse** (VHHS) at 847-932-2040, or **Cam Traut** (LHS) 847-327-7016. As is customary, we are working with the Lake County Health Department on this matter. Please consult the District 128 web site for updates and links to additional resources.

Sincerely,



David L. Clough, Ph.D.  
Superintendent