

# Yale Public Schools

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Dear Parents,

October 19, 2009

This note is to update you that we have a confirmed case of MRSA infection of a Farrell-Emmett student. The student is being treated by a physician and we anticipate the student will return to school when medical clearance is received. We continue to contact the St. Clair County Health Department for direction each time we receive notice of a MRSA infection in one of our students.

The Health Department monitors the cases in the county and advises us on sanitation and operation. They continue to recommend that we conduct school as usual and inform parents and students on proper hygiene, wound care and cleanliness procedures. Please see the information on the back of the this letter regarding identifying, controlling and preventing MRSA.

The Health Department and the Center for Disease Control do not recommend canceling school to address this problem. They tell us that this bacterium has been around for many years and can be treated by a physician. We have and will spend extra time cleaning and disinfecting our buildings and will continue to report all cases to the Health Department for their recommendations. I will not send a letter each time a case is reported, however, you are welcome to call me or your child's principal for an update at any time.

I have listed several Health Department prevention tips below. Please remain vigilant for symptoms in your child and contact your physician if any appear. The school staff will continue our cleaning and disinfecting and our association with the Health Department. As always, communication is key. Please feel free to call me or the Health Department if you have questions.

MRSA is a type of staph bacteria that is resistant to antibiotics such as methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin, but it is treatable. A staph infection such as MRSA is not airborne; it spreads most easily from person to person and occurs most often in persons who have weakened immune systems. This infection can also be spread by sharing clothing, towels, razors, bar soap, and by touching inanimate objects if the strain is still alive.

If you or your child has a skin infection or wound that isn't responding as it should to usual treatment, contact your physician immediately. Your doctor can then try to do a culture to confirm that it is MRSA and find out what antibiotics will work to treat the infection. Although MRSA is resistant to methicillin and related penicillin type antibiotics, there are usually other antibiotics that still work. If you notice a wound, please keep it covered completely with a bandage to prevent spread to others.

It is recommended by various public health agencies that students and staff members routinely follow the protocol below as a precaution:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue or sleeve if you cough/sneeze.
- Students with staph infections should not participate in contact activities.
- Sanitize locker rooms, weight room and door knobs with diluted bleach (1/4 c. bleach to 1 gallon water).
- Do not share gym clothes, towels, razors or bar soap.
- Keep clothes/towels separate and take gym/athletic clothing home regularly to be washed.
- Wash clothes, towels and sheets in hottest suitable water with laundry detergent. Add bleach if desired.
- Seek medical attention if you believe you may have been infected.
- Cover skin abrasions and cuts with clean dry bandages to prevent infection.

If you have additional questions or concerns about this issue, please visit the St. Clair County Health Department website at <http://www.stclaircounty.org/Offices/health/forms/FactSheets/MRSA.pdf> or contact your family physician. MRSA information is included on the back of this letter. Thank you for your support and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Frank Johnson, Superintendent

