

October 17, 2008

Laurel Highlands School Community:

Our school nurse verified that a student in the high school has tested positive for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). Prior to the school becoming aware, this student began treatment for MRSA.

It is not possible to identify the source of infection to these individuals. It may or may not have occurred within the school. MRSA is a bacteria that causes a staph infection. Staph bacteria are spread by contact with the hands, wound drainage, or nasal secretions of an infected person. Spreading of MRSA by inanimate environmental objects (desks, doorknobs, etc..) is not clear but is less important than direct person-to-person spread.

On October 1st, the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds began meeting with the custodial staff to remind them to be diligent in their cleaning and disinfecting practices, as cold and flu season is beginning. The custodians are following guidelines for cleaning as recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, as well as the directions of the products they use for cleaning and disinfecting.

To view the disinfectant being used in most of the district, please follow the following link:

www.cello-online.com/techsheets/I09-ts.pdf

To view the disinfectant being used in the Middle School (Twist and Fill, #5), please follow this link:

<http://multimedia.3m.com/mws/mediawebserver?66666UuZjcFSLXTt4XfX5X&2EVuQEcuZgVs6EVs6E666666-->

To help aid in protection, universal precautions should always be followed in any situation. Hand washing is the most effective method of preventing the spread of staph. Infections. Persons should wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after having contact with secretions from the nose or skin drainage from an open wound. In addition, personal items such as towels, washcloths, and clothing should not be shared.

Please talk openly about this with your children. Your doctor should see any skin infection that does not heal. For additional information, please review the enclosed informational handout, contact your doctor, or visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health's web site at www.dsf.health.state.pa.us.

We have been in contact with the Uniontown Hospital and local health care providers. As a community, we are attempting to keep the public informed as well as helping us all to understand what we need to know about MRSA.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

John K. Diamond
High School Principal

Craig McKee
Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds