

# Pandora-Gilboa

## Local Schools

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Dale Lewellen, Superintendent  
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October 23, 2007

*Re: MRSA Staph Infection Information*

Dear Parents:

Many parents are concerned about recent news accounts concerning methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), a type of “staph” infection that can cause skin infections that may be difficult to treat. Please know that all district buildings are following guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health regarding prevention of MRSA, including proper cleaning of school facilities. We also are assisting ODH with education efforts by sharing some of the agency’s answers to frequently asked questions about MRSA:

### **What are typical symptoms of MRSA?**

Common signs of a skin infection include redness, warmth, swelling and tenderness. Often a MRSA infection will look like a spider bite, boil, abscess or pimple. If left untreated, it could progress into a more serious illness.

### **How is MRSA spread?**

In outbreak situations, the environment has not played a significant role in the transmission of MRSA. Studies in health care and community settings show skin-to-skin contact, direct contact with infected wound drainage or contact with contaminated surfaces or things such as sports equipment as the likely sources of transmission. MRSA skin infections are not spread through the air.

### **How can students protect themselves?**

Students can protect themselves from infections by:

- Practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping their hands clean by washing with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rubs, and showering after games and practices);
- Covering any open skin areas such as abrasions or cuts with clean dry bandages; not sharing personal items such as towels or razors;
- Using barriers (e.g., clothing or towels) between skin and shared equipment;
- If they have open wounds, NOT using whirlpools, hydrotherapy pools, cold tubs, swimming pools and other common tubs;
- Wiping surfaces of equipment before and after use; and
- Getting tested if they think they may have MRSA.

We share your concerns about the health and safety of our students. Please learn as much as you can about MRSA, be aware of possible symptoms and seek medical attention promptly if needed. For more specific information about this infection, please visit the Ohio Department of Health’s Web site at: [www.odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov).

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After reading the *Information and Guidelines for Schools* publication from the Ohio Department of Health concerning MRSA, the Pandora-Gilboa School District is taking the following actions to prevent the spread of the bacteria:

- We will be thoroughly disinfecting the school building, including locker rooms and buses, before the end of the day, Monday, October 29, 2007.
- We will be stepping up our efforts to educate students to the importance of personal hygiene, in particular, hand washing.
- We are reviewing our regular cleaning schedule to ensure that we are maintaining the most thorough schedule of disinfecting possible.
- We will ask parents who suspect their child may have some form of MRSA infection to provide a doctor's note certifying that the child is being treated for the infection and may return to school.

Please understand that children may contract the MRSA infection anywhere, not just in school. Even though we can never be certain how, or where, an individual has become infected, the school is committed to doing everything possible to stop the spread of the bacteria.

We ask that parents talk to your children and encourage them to wash their hands often at school and at home. We are confident that these steps are the district's best course of action to help prevent the spread of the bacteria.

Respectfully,

Pandora-Gilboa Administration