



## **Attention HBGSD Parents, Guardians and Staff,**

The Harrisburg School District is being proactive in sharing the health information below.

On Friday, October 5, 2018, we learned that two young students, who are members of the same family, were reported to have a skin infection that is caused by Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus, commonly referred to as [Community Associated MRSA](#).

This incidence is NOT a school-wide outbreak of MRSA. This health concern involves two children from the same family, who attend Capital Area Head Start and Foose Elementary School. As a precaution and in keeping with industry cleaning standards, the building will be properly sanitized before students and staff return to school next week.

### ***What is MRSA and Who is at Risk in the Community?***

MRSA (Mur-sa) is a type of bacteria that is resistant to penicillin, as well as some other antibiotics that are commonly used to treat bacterial infection. Anyone can get MRSA on their body from contact with an infected wound or by sharing personal items, such as towels, washcloths, clothing or razors, that have touched infected skin. MRSA infection risk can be increased when a person is in activities or places that involve crowding, skin-to-skin contact, and shared equipment or supplies. Community Associated MRSA infections may occur in otherwise healthy persons with no traditional MRSA associated risk factors. MRSA knows no age boundaries and has been documented in newborn babies, toddlers, teens, adults, and the elderly.

### **Symptoms of MRSA:**

Infections vary depending on the part of the body infected. Skin infections are the most common. MRSA skin infections may look like a spider bite, impetigo, diaper rash, boils or abscesses. Occasionally MRSA gets into the bloodstream or lungs and cause severe illness. If you think your child has a MRSA infection consult your healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment. Please notify your school principal as well so that he/she can take proper precautions for your child and others in the building.

### **Attending School:**

Once diagnosed, a doctor's note is required for a child to return to school. Children with a MRSA skin infection may return to school after the infection has been medically treated, and ONLY if the affected skin area can be covered and contained in a clean dry dressing that is changed at home (not at school) and a special health care plan is in place.

***Please take the following precautions to help prevent Community Associated MRSA:***

- **Hand washing is the most effective method** of preventing the spread of germs, including MRSA.
- **Cover your wounds.** Keep wounds covered with clean, dry bandages until healed. Do not try to treat the infection yourself by picking or popping the sore. Follow your doctor's instructions about proper care of the wound.
- **Do not share personal items.** Personal items include towels, washcloths, razors and clothing, etc.
- **Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces and items** that may be soiled with bodily fluids or secretions are also important.
- **Wash used sheets, towels, and clothes** in hot water and laundry detergent. Use a dryer to dry them completely.

Please talk to your child's doctor if you are concerned that your child might have a bacterial infection. The doctor will be able to work with you to come up with a treatment plan. If your child is diagnosed, be sure to get a note from the doctor stating when your child can return to school.

***For questions, please contact your school principal, your child's pediatrician or primary care provider.***

*The above information comes from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control. For additional information on this subject, please visit the website of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) or speak with your child's healthcare provider.*

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