



NORTH ROSE - WOLCOTT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
11669 SALTER-COLVIN ROAD, WOLCOTT, NEW YORK 14590 FAX (315) 594-2352

Lucinda Miner.
Superintendent
315.594.3141

Dr. John Boronkay
Director of Curriculum
315.594.3141

Robert Magin
School Business Administrator
315.594.3150

Angela Kirkey
Coordinator of Pupil Services
315.587.9937, FAX 315.587.9925

October 22, 2007

Dear Parents, Faculty, and Staff:

There have been recent reports of students with outbreaks of MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). MRSA is highly contagious, antibiotic resistant, and now being found in schools in New York as well as other locations and geographic areas. In a preventive measure, I am asking you to become aware of MRSA symptoms and procedures to help avoid the infection.

“Why Did This Happen All of a Sudden?”

Ms. Sapna Kollali, staff writer for the “Syracuse Post-Standard,” interviewed Onondaga County Health Commissioner Cynthia Morrow and University Hospital infectious disease specialist Shelly Gilroy and they stated that “Both traditional staph infections and the MRSA strain have been around for decades.” In addition, Ms. Gilroy stated “Not everyone who comes in contact with MRSA will get sick.”

“What Does a Staph or MRSA Infection Look Like?”

Staph bacteria, including MRSA, can cause skin infections that may look like a pimple, boil, or ingrown hair and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus, and other drainage. Many occur in the armpits, neck, groin, and buttocks where bacteria grow. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or even death.

“What Can We Do to Help Prevent Staph or MRSA Infections?”

Practice good hygiene including:

- Keep your hands clean
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed
- Shower after physical activity
- Properly clean gear and equipment
- Consult your trainer/physician for all active wounds
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, or razors

“What Should I Do if I Think I Have a Staph or MRSA Infection?”

Contact your health care provider immediately. Make sure to ask to have your wounds cultured for MRSA.

Every child will graduate and meet NYS Standards and will be prepared to be a productive and self sufficient citizen ready to go on to higher education, the work place, or the military.

“How is MRSA Spread?”

Any open wound is a potential entry point for MRSA. Factors that have been associated with the spread of MRSA skin infections include: close skin-to-skin contact, openings in the skin such as cuts or abrasions, contaminated items, crowded living conditions, and poor hygiene. Students playing sports, at home or at school, are at greater risk because they share equipment and have skin contact, which are both common causes of infections.

“If I Have MRSA, Can I Go to School or Work?”

According to Commissioner Morrow and Ms. Gilroy individuals can go to school or work as long as the infected area is completely covered. Again, they emphasize that individuals wash their hands regularly, change bandages regularly, and properly dispose of the bandages to avoid passing on the infection.

“Are We Going to be Seeing and Hearing About More Local Schools with Staph Cases?”

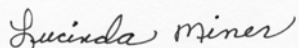
Commissioner Morrow stated “Yes” because the public is becoming more aware of it. MRSA had impacted schools in the past, but few paid attention. She further emphasized “The situation today is not significantly different than it was a month ago. There’s been no sudden change in infections at the local, state, or national level. It’s about increased attention from the media and people becoming more informed.”

For further information you may visit this website: www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable

Look in the “A-Z Index” under “M” for MRSA.

We are taking extra efforts here in our schools to spray, let stand, and wipe off doors, door knobs, faucet fixtures, drinking fountains, and all places where hands frequently touch. Please remember that personal hygiene is the best defense against any staph or MRSA infection. Thank you for your attention to this important matter as we work together to keep our students safe.

Sincerely,



Lucinda Miner
Superintendent

LM:jm