

## Staph Infection Information

The intent of this letter is to communicate factual information to all WISD parents regarding staph infections and to outline precautions that students frequently need to be reminded of not only by school personnel but from you, their parents. In addition, we have provided a web link to the Texas Department of Health Services that provides a wealth of information regarding staph infections, precautions and treatment.

We have and will continue to provide your children with our best efforts to control and prevent the spread of all contagious infections by diligently following the guidelines set forth by the Texas Department of Health for Schools. With your assistance, we can be successful.

*Staphylococcus aureus*, or staph is a common germ that many people carry in their nasal passages, under fingernails or on their skin with no ill effects. MRSA is a type of staph that has developed antibiotic resistance (certain antibiotics are unable to kill the bacteria). Since staph is spread primarily by direct (skin-to-skin) human contact or with direct contact to wound drainage of someone who is carrying or infected with the bacteria, anyone with a break in his or her skin is at risk. MRSA may also occur less frequently through indirect contact with contaminated surfaces or items. **\*Please note: MRSA is not spread through the air.**

Staph infections begin abruptly. Symptoms may include a large area of redness on the skin, swelling and pain, followed by a pustule or abscess or boils and carbuncles (red, lumpy sores filled with pus). If left untreated, staph can infect blood and bones, causing severe illness that requires hospitalization.

Students and their family members should take the following precautions to help prevent skin infections:

- Encourage frequent hand washing with soap and warm water.
- Encourage students to keep their fingernails clean and clipped short.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or anything contaminated by a wound.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as razors, towels, deodorant, or soap that directly touches the body.
- Clean and disinfect objects (such as gym and sports equipment) before use.
- Wash dirty clothes, linens, and towels with hot water and laundry detergent. Using hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria.
- Encourage students who participate in contact sports to shower immediately after each practice, game, or match
- Keep open or draining sores and lesions clean and covered. Anyone assisting with wound care should wear gloves and wash their hands with soap and water after dressing changes.

We encourage you to be vigilant in looking for signs and symptoms of staph infections. If you or any member of your family exhibit symptoms as described above, you are encouraged to contact your family doctor. Additional information about staph and MRSA can be found at <http://www.mrsatexas.org>