



Ichabod Crane Central School District

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October 22, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As you know, there has been some widespread media attention over Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). MRSA is a type of infection caused by the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*, which is also referred to as "staph." "Staph" are bacteria commonly carried on the skin and in the nose, and some strains are resistant to a class of antibiotics that are frequently used to treat it, such as Methicillin, hence the name Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Please be assured that the staff at Ichabod Crane is alert to this situation and proactive steps are being taken to minimize the potential for transmission in our school facilities. In particular, disinfectant has been applied daily to wet areas (i.e., all bathrooms, cafeterias), nurses' offices, and locker rooms, and door handles. Areas of concern are continually monitored to identify and disinfect.

Cases of skin infections caused by MRSA have been identified in some communities, most involving athletes (although some non-athletes have been affected as well). Skin infections such as abscesses and boils are the most common form of this infection. Staph, including MRSA, can be spread among people having close contact with an infected person, although MRSA is almost always spread by direct physical contact and not through the air. Spread may also occur through indirect contact by touching objects contaminated with Staph bacteria or MRSA (such as towels, clothes, workout areas or sports equipment).

Athletes, athletic personnel, and parents can help prevent and control MRSA infections within the athletic setting by:

1. Washing hands frequently with soap and water, especially after using any sports facilities.
2. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, razors, clothing or uniforms.
3. Report any suspicious skin sore or boil to the school nurse immediately.
4. If a person participates in close contact sports (e.g., wrestling and football), shower with soap immediately after each practice, game, or match.

5. Non-washable gear should be wiped down with alcohol wipes after each use.
6. Infected sites should be covered with a bandage, and individuals with an infection that involves pus, who are involved in close contact sports, should be excluded until there is no pus drainage.
7. Any cut or break in the skin should be washed with soap and water, and a clean, dry dressing applied.

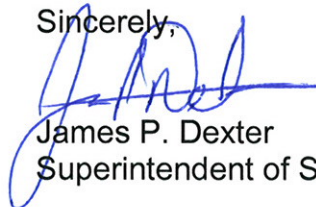
In addition, everyone can take steps to protect from spreading infections by using "Universal Precautions," such as proper hand washing procedures and not sharing personal items.

Practices at Ichabod Crane will continue to be monitored and revised as needed or as advised by the New York State Education Department and/or by the Columbia County Health Department.

Additional information about MRSA can be found at the New York State Department of Health's Web site at <http://health.state.ny.us>

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child(ren)'s building principal.

Sincerely,



James P. Dexter
Superintendent of Schools

JPD:nb