



## Old Bridge Township Public Schools

Patrick A. Torre Administration Building  
4207 Route 516  
Matawan, New Jersey 07747  
Fax (732) 583-4644

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**Dr. Simon M. Bosco**  
Superintendent of  
Schools  
(732) 290-3976

**Mrs. Nancy Mongon**  
School Business  
Administrator & Board  
Secretary  
(732) 290-3952

**Dr. Francis Perrino**  
Assistant  
Superintendent  
(732) 290-3970

**Dr. Christine D. Piscitelli**  
Director of Secondary  
Education  
(732) 290-3968

**Ms. Donna Kibbler**  
Director of Elementary  
Education  
(732) 290-3967

**Dr. Elaine Bettencourt**  
Director of Testing,  
BSI & ESL  
(732) 360-4464

**Dr. Barbara Cuthbert**  
Director of Special  
Services  
(732) 360-4461

Dear Parents and School Staff:

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide you with information about MRSA staph infections, which have affected several school systems, nationwide, including a few in New Jersey. To date, we are aware of only one reported case in Old Bridge and that student has been treated and cleared to return to school by the treating physician. MRSA stands for *Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*, a form of staph infection that does not respond to routine treatment with some commonly used antibiotics. While effective treatments are available, the MRSA-related death of two students last week underscores the importance of raising awareness and preventing infection. Further information is available from the Center for Disease Control at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html).

### MRSA Facts

- *Staphylococcus aureus* (“staph”) infections have been around for a long time, causing mild to severe illness. MRSA is a kind of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as a “staph infection”. Mild infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

- Staph is passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items. The bacteria may live in people’s noses and on their skin and most of the time does not cause any problem. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes cause infection. The main ways to prevent staph infection are to wash hands and care for wounds properly.

### Practical Advice for Teachers

- Observe children for open wounds. If any are draining or contain pus, refer the child to the school nurse.

- Encourage hand washing before eating and after toileting.

- Coaches should ensure that athletes wash their hands, cover their wounds, and not share personal items and towels.

### Practical Advice for Parents

- Clean wounds and cover them with a clean, dry bandage. Wounds that do not heal properly need medical attention. The only way to determine if an infection

is caused by MRSA is through laboratory testing ordered by a physician or other health care provider.

- Teach children to wash their hands regularly, such as before eating and after toileting.
- Be sure your family members use antibiotics properly. Take all that are prescribed, even if the symptoms stop before the prescription is used up. Do not share prescriptions.
- Children who participate in sporting events should wash their hands after each practice and game. They should not share equipment, uniforms, towels, or other personal items (e.g., razors). Wash uniforms and towels with hot water and detergent after each use.

**General Disinfection Instructions**

- In athletics, mats, benches or other shared athletic equipment that might have skin contact should be disinfected after each game or practice.
- Contaminated surfaces may be cleaned using an EPA-registered cleaner or bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).
- Routine cleaning of other surfaces is all that is recommended. Because the bacteria live on the skin, they may be reintroduced into any environment at any time. Therefore, hand washing and wound care remain the primary means of preventing staph infections.

We have directed our custodial staff to increase the level of cleaning performed in all health offices, lavatories and athletic areas. We have also ordered stronger disinfectants that are permissible to be utilized in schools. We will continue to keep you apprised. Further information will be released as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

*Simon M. Bosco*

Simon M. Bosco, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools