



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Office of School Health

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Joel I. Klein
Chancellor
Department of Education

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
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Hygiene

Dear Principal and Parent Coordinator,

We know you may be concerned about the issue of staph infections in schools and want to provide you with the best possible information to protect students and educate parents.

- Staph infections are common skin infections and are treatable. Fatal cases in children are extremely rare. MRSA (Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a kind of staph infection that is difficult to treat with certain antibiotics, but it is still treatable.
- The best way to prevent infections is to encourage good hand washing. Please ensure that bathrooms have adequate supplies of liquid soap and paper towels, and discourage sharing of personal items, such as towels, razors, or lipstick. It is important to be particularly vigilant about these precautions among students who share sports equipment.
- Staph infections spread by direct contact with a break in the skin (e.g., wounds) or by sharing personal items. Transmission in a classroom setting is very unlikely.
- Staph infection may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus. In more serious cases, the patient may experience fever, excessive tiredness or difficulty breathing. If a child develops these symptoms, contact a doctor.
- If a student or parent notifies you of a staph infection, contact your school nurse or borough nursing director. If a student has a staph infection, the wound should be covered with a bandage to protect others. It is not necessary to keep him or her out of school or close the school.
- Routine cleaning with EPA registered disinfectants (www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_h_mrsa_vre.pdf) should be sufficient for sports equipment and indoor surfaces. Shared sports equipment should be wiped down between each use.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Oxiris Barbot, Medical Director Office of School Health, at 212-442-1554.

Joel Klein, Chancellor, Department of Education

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH, Commissioner, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene