



Westview Word

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Nov. 27, 2007

We recently learned of a lab-confirmed case of a "resistant" bacterial skin infection (MRSA) at our school. Please note that skin infections are common and life-threatening complications are rare.

I want to take this opportunity to remind you of what we are doing at school and what you can do to prevent the spread of germs. Due to confidentiality requirements, we cannot share specific information about this case, but wanted you to know that we will follow public health guidelines that include consulting with our local health department and reporting to them if three or more cases are reported.

In addition to our regular district-wide cleaning practices, which include disinfecting all restrooms, health rooms, drinking fountains and faucets every evening, custodial staff disinfecting all surfaces in the classroom of the infected student or staff member. There is no evidence that mega-disinfection of school facilities is necessary or effective outside of certain hospital settings.

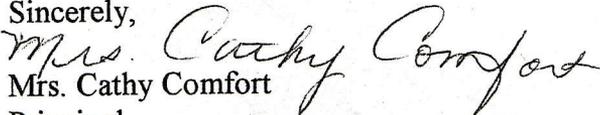
Hand washing is the most effective method of preventing the spread of germs, including those that cause this infection. Teachers are encouraging frequent hand washing in school and we appreciate your efforts to do the same at home.

School nurses monitor any suspected or reported skin infections through conversations with parents/guardians, medical providers and assess suspect wounds as needed. We urge parents and guardians to use prevention strategies, keep wounds clean and covered, and follow up with health care professionals when there are suspicious sores. In the community, most skin infections appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. These skin conditions often occur at sites of visible skin trauma such as cuts and abrasions and areas of the body covered by hair.

Our goal in Spokane Public Schools is to develop a sensible, balanced and medically appropriate response to skin infections such as MRSA. Since 30-50 percent of the population carries staph in their noses, germs are re-introduced into our environment every day. Overuse of disinfectants can produce other health issues for students with asthma and other sensitivity issues.

Families may not be alerted to each case of MRSA in the future, but we wanted you to be aware of our practices.

Please contact our office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cathy Comfort
Principal