

Williamstown Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

115 Church Street

Williamstown, MA 01267

Rose Ellis
SUPERINTENDENT

Stephen Johnson
PRINCIPAL

November 9, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The focus of this memo is to inform parents, families and employees about reports that have recently been in the media regarding MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus), a type of staph infection that is resistant to certain antibiotics. *Williamstown Elementary School has not had any reported cases of MRSA.* However, it is important to alert families to symptoms and suggestions. MRSA is an infection that has been seen in the past in people who have been recently hospitalized. The strain of MRSA that has received a great deal of community attention is called "Community-associated MRSA" (CA-MRSA). Anyone can get this type of MRSA but it is most frequently transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact (especially if there is an open sore on the skin) or by contact with a contaminated item such as a towel, clothing or athletic equipment.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include skin infections that look like a pimple or boil. The area may become red, swollen, and painful and may have pus drainage. This can be treated. Treatment is more effective if medical attention is sought immediately.

Williamstown Elementary School employees are aware of this community staph infection. Soap dispensers will be kept well-stocked and frequent hand-washing will be encouraged.

In what settings do MRSA skin infections occur?

Some settings have factors that make it easier for MRSA to be transmitted.

- These factors, referred to as the 5 C's, are as follows: Crowding, frequent skin-to-skin Contact, Compromised skin (i.e., cuts or abrasions), Contaminated items and surfaces, and lack of Cleanliness.
- Locations where the 5 C's are common include schools, dormitories, military barracks, households, correctional facilities and daycare centers.