



Carroll Independent School District

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Superintendent, David J. Faltys, Ed.D.

October 23, 2007

Dear Parents,

Like many schools across the nation, Carroll ISD has been working diligently to educate students, staff and parents about the problem of staphylococcus bacteria, better known as "staph." This is a common type of bacteria that can cause skin infections in some individuals. We deal with cases of staph every year, but recent news of a more drug-resistant (MRSA) strain has caused increased concern. In the past, you read mostly about staph infections following surgical procedures in hospitals. If staph can be found in a sterile hospital setting, you can imagine how difficult it is to control the bacteria in other public places such as grocery stores, restrooms, school locker rooms, etc.

Symptoms of staph include a rash, pimple or boil area that may be red, swollen, painful or have pus or other drainage. Staph can be spread through skin to skin contact – especially if the individual has an exposed open cut or wound. The presence of these symptoms does not necessarily confirm a staph infection. There have been a number of students and adults who believed they might have staph, only to learn they had a simple rash, bug bite or poison oak. However, it is important to check with your family physician to be sure.

The absolute best remedy for preventing the spread of staph is frequent hand washing with soap and water. We regularly encourage our students to wash their hands to prevent the spread of germs, but having parents reinforce this message at home would be helpful. We also encourage students not to share equipment, water bottles, towels and clothing with other students and to avoid walking barefoot in public areas. Another great preventative strategy is for students to take gym clothes and uniforms home for washing every night. All of these strategies for reducing personal risk can be found on our district's website under the breaking news link: www.southlakecarroll.edu.

Carroll ISD has about 14 confirmed cases of common staph infections. These cases have been diagnosed and treated by personal physicians. Only one student has a confirmed case of the more drug-resistant MRSA strain of staph, but we are told that student is responding to treatment. Confirmation of staph does not necessarily mean that a student has to be isolated or refrain from participation in extra curricular activities. In most cases, the student is merely treated with antibiotics and covers the infected area with a bandage. CISD will continue to comply with physician orders, handling each student situation on a case by case basis. Rest assured that we are in constant consultation on this topic with school administrators, nurses, trainers and healthcare professionals.

Confidentiality of personal student health information is a top priority. For this reason, specifics about individual cases or student situations may not be shared with the general public. However, CISD is

promoting the education and awareness of preventative measures to help stop the spread of staph. We hope that each of you will do your part to help reduce the risks to our students.

We are told by experts at the Tarrant County Health Department that Carroll ISD is going above and beyond the department's recommendations for managing the spread of staph. In addition to educating our students about staph, the district is:

- Disinfecting locker rooms, dressing areas and restrooms regularly.
- Asking students/athletes to keep cuts and lesions covered.
- Requesting parents/students report possible staph infections and/or confirmed cases to athletic trainers, nurses and principals.
- Fogging locker rooms weekly with an industrial fogger designed to kill staph.
- Requesting athletes/students empty PE/athletic lockers every Wednesday evening for a more thorough cleaning.
- Having all coaches meet with their athletes about washing their towels, socks, uniforms, pads, etc. regularly.
- Discouraging the sharing of clothing, equipment, towels, razors or soaps, etc.
- Providing Clorox wipes to coaches/PE teachers to wipe down weight rooms, etc.

Please remember that this is not a situation isolated to athletes and locker rooms. All students should do their part to help prevent the spread of the bacteria that causes staph. Carroll ISD has prepared both a general fact sheet and a student fact sheet to educate our Dragons about preventative measures that can help reduce individual risk. These documents are available on the district's website under the Breaking News link: www.southlakecarroll.edu.

This same information has also been distributed through our electronic newsletters. If you do not currently receive the district's weekly electronic newsletter, please subscribe by visiting our website and signing up today. This is the quickest, most efficient way for you to receive all the latest Dragon news. Thank you for your continued support of Carroll ISD.

Sincerely,



David J. Faltys, Ed.D.
Superintendent