

November 26, 2007

Parents of PISD Students,

Media reports over the past few days have elevated the concern about a particular type of staph infection known as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). Some of the news articles include reports of the possibility of the presence of MRSA in school settings. The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the precautions that Perryton ISD does on a routine basis to combat the spreading of infections among students and staff and some steps that have been taken in recent weeks as additional precautions.

*Staph aureus* infections are not new. This type of infection has been around for some time. MRSA, which is a type of staph infection, is more difficult to treat because traditional or routine treatments are not as effective in combating the infection and as a result there is an elevated concern regarding the spread of the infection. Additional information about staph infections and MRSA can be found at the Texas Department of State Health Services at [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us). Another website which may prove helpful in providing understanding about MRSA is [www.mrsaTexas.org](http://www.mrsaTexas.org).

The custodial personnel at Perryton ISD are routinely trained in the proper methods for cleaning and disinfecting all of the surfaces on which bacteria or other disease causing organisms may be present. Surfaces with which students or staff may come in contact are cleaned on a daily basis. Water fountains, lavatories, toilets and other surfaces in restrooms are cleaned and inspected more frequently. Shower and locker room facilities at the secondary campus are cleaned and disinfected routinely. Cafeteria personnel are, likewise, trained in the proper procedures for cleaning and disinfecting all of the kitchen utensils, serving line surfaces, dining tables and other items used in the food preparation process. A hospital grade disinfectant is used in cleaning all surfaces, and again, our custodial and cafeteria personnel are trained in the proper use of these materials.

In addition to the routine cleaning and disinfecting that our custodians and cafeteria personnel do, our maintenance department has installed hand sanitizers in all classrooms. The elementary classrooms have had these devices for some time, and secondary classrooms in both high school and junior high have now been equipped with these in the past week or so.

Teachers have received communications encouraging them to talk to their students about personal sanitation procedures such as frequent hand washing and using hand sanitizers. Our coaches have been reminded about precautions to take to prevent the spread of germs in locker rooms, showers, and on athletic equipment, etc.

Since the recent press coverage regarding MRSA, the custodial and cafeteria staffs been provided additional training sessions in the past few weeks over the methods for cleaning procedures related to combating the spread of infections. The intent of the training was to make sure our employees know what to do and are following through in doing a good job.

No environment is completely safe from infectious disease. The micro-organisms that cause these infections are present in our homes, restaurants, offices, work places, and schools. None the less, you can be sure Perryton ISD is taking this matter seriously and will make every effort to insure the safety of our students and staff.

Please take the time to talk with your child about proper sanitation. Encourage them to wash their hands often and use hand sanitizers when available. Please seek additional information on the web sites provided above to learn more about MRSA and how to combat it.