

New Story Schools of Ohio: School Procedure for MRSA Prevention and Management

Introduction:

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a bacterium resistant to certain antibiotics, making it challenging to treat. MRSA infections can occur in various settings, including schools. To ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors, our school implements the following policy:

Transmission of MRSA:

Direct Contact:

MRSA is primarily transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected individual. This can occur during activities such as sports, physical education classes, or close personal contact.

Individuals with open wounds or cuts are particularly susceptible to MRSA transmission through direct contact with contaminated skin or surfaces.

Indirect Contact:

MRSA can also be transmitted indirectly through contact with contaminated objects or surfaces. Common items such as towels, athletic equipment, shared clothing, or surfaces in shared spaces like locker rooms and classrooms can harbor MRSA bacteria.

Individuals who touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their skin, especially areas with cuts, abrasions, or mucous membranes, may introduce MRSA into their bodies.

Respiratory Transmission:

Although less common, MRSA can also be transmitted through respiratory droplets when infected individuals cough or sneeze. However, respiratory transmission is more typical in healthcare settings rather than school environments.

Asymptomatic Carriers:

Some individuals may carry MRSA bacteria on their skin or in their nasal passages without showing any symptoms of infection. These asymptomatic carriers can unknowingly transmit MRSA to others through direct or indirect contact.

Poor Hygiene Practices:

Inadequate hand hygiene, such as not washing hands properly or not using hand sanitizers, can contribute to the transmission of MRSA. Touching contaminated surfaces or individuals without proper hand hygiene increases the risk of MRSA spread.

By understanding the various modes of transmission, individuals within the school community can take proactive measures to prevent the spread of MRSA and promote a healthier environment for everyone.

Prevention Measures:

Education and Awareness:

The school will provide education and raise awareness among students, staff, and parents about MRSA transmission, symptoms, and prevention strategies through informational sessions, posters, and other relevant materials.

Informational materials will be distributed regularly via school newsletters, websites, and other communication channels.

Hand Hygiene:

All students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to practice proper handwashing techniques with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.

Personal Hygiene:

Students and staff are encouraged to maintain good personal hygiene practices, including regular bathing, keeping wounds clean and covered, and avoiding sharing personal items such as towels, clothing, and toiletries.

Environmental Cleaning:

The school will implement routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, desks, and cafeteria tables, using EPA-approved disinfectants effective against MRSA.

A 1:100 bleach to water ratio can be used as an effective disinfectant for cleaning affected surfaces.

Custodial staff will receive training on proper cleaning procedures to minimize the risk of MRSA transmission.

Identification and Management of MRSA Cases:

Reporting and Communication:

Students, staff, or parents who suspect they have MRSA or have been diagnosed with MRSA must report it to the school nurse or designated staff member promptly.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the reporting and management process.

Exclusion from School:

Students or staff members who are colonized with MRSA do not need to be routinely excluded from the classroom unless directed by a physician.

Students with MRSA infections may remain in school if the affected area can be adequately covered with a clean, dry bandage. However, students with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be contained with bandaging must be excluded from school until the drainage is resolved.

The decision regarding exclusion from school will be made in consultation with the school nurse, designated staff and healthcare professionals. Decisions regarding exclusion from the classroom should

be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual's health status and the potential risk of MRSA transmission.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Use disposable gloves when:

Providing care for students with draining wounds or lesions potentially contaminated with MRSA.

Handling soiled items or surfaces contaminated with body fluids.

Dispose of gloves properly after each use and perform hand hygiene immediately afterward.

Wound Management:

Students with MRSA infections should keep their wounds covered with clean, dry bandages.

Advise students to avoid picking at or touching their wounds to prevent further contamination and spread of MRSA.

Parent Notification:

Parents of students diagnosed with MRSA will be notified discreetly and provided with information about the infection, preventive measures, and any necessary actions to take, such as seeking medical evaluation for their child.

Staff Training:

In-Service Training:

All school staff, including teachers, administrators, nurses, and custodial personnel, will receive regular training on MRSA prevention, identification, and management protocols.

Training sessions will be conducted at the beginning of each school year and reinforced periodically.

Policy Review and Updates:

Annual Review:

The school's MRSA policy will be reviewed annually by the administrative team in collaboration with healthcare professionals to ensure alignment with current guidelines.