



[http://www.psd202.org/PEHS/Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202](http://www.psd202.org/PEHS/Plainfield%20Community%20Consolidated%20School%20District%20202)

**PLAINFIELD EAST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS**

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<http://www.psd202.org/pehs>

September 3, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

You may have heard or seen media coverage concerning MRSA or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infections in school-aged children. We would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information about MRSA and, most importantly, how to prevent and control the spread of these infections.

*Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as “staph,” is a bacterium that is commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 30% of the population is colonized (when bacteria are present, but not causing an infection) in the nose with staph bacteria, and approximately 1% is colonized with MRSA, a type of staph that is resistant to certain antibiotics. Most of the infections caused by staph, including MRSA, are skin infections, such as boils. MRSA infections are most likely to occur among student athletes participating in sports where there is skin contact and/or trauma to skin (e.g., abrasions, “turf burns”). Staph skin infections can be red, painful, swollen, or have pus, or other drainage. Individuals who believe they may have a staph infection or MRSA infection should contact their medical provider for evaluation and appropriate treatment.

Practicing good hygiene is one of the most important things that we can all do to control the spread of staph and other infections:

- Keep hands clean by frequently washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes covered with a clean bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people’s wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items that directly touch the body, such as towels, razors, and water bottles
- Keep fingernails clean and clipped short.
- See your medical provider if you have a skin infection that is not getting better.

Students participating in contact sports or other activities that lead to close skin-to-skin contact should take additional precautions related to skin infections and hygiene:

- Do not share towels, clothing, or uniforms.
- Shower as soon as possible after practice or games are over; do not share bar soap.
- Keep equipment clean. Follow coaches’ directions about cleaning equipment.
- Wash dirty uniforms, practice clothing, and used towels with hot water and laundry detergent.
- Using a hot dryer, rather than air-drying, also helps kill bacteria.

- Report any cuts, abrasions, or wounds to the coach and school nurse.

Schools are cleaned daily with EPA-approved cleaners that kill a variety of viruses and bacteria, including MRSA. Although environmental cleaning is important for a variety of reasons, it is not a substitute for the measures listed above.

For more information about MRSA and how to prevent it, see:

- The Illinois Department of Public Health Website:  
[http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/MRSA\\_home.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/MRSA_home.htm)
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar\\_mrsa\\_ca.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca.html)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Torkelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Tim Torkelson  
Athletic Director

