

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4

CHESTER • DEEP RIVER • ESSEX

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

There has been a case of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA) diagnosed in a student attending Valley Regional High School. The family sought medical intervention and the student has been under treatment. The student's physician determined that the individual is not contagious and endorsed full participation in school and extra-curricular activities.

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, "MRSA is a kind of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as a staph infection. Mild infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections. Staph is passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items. The bacteria may live in people's noses and on their skin and most of the time do not cause any problem. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes cause infection. The main ways to prevent staph infection are to wash hands and care for wounds properly." Children with the MRSA infection, based upon a physician's recommendation, may require exclusion from the school setting for a period in some cases. It is important to seek medical attention and communicate with the school if you suspect that your child has a case of MRSA.

I urge you to review the document [Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Infections \(MRSA\): MRSA Facts for Schools](#) from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. You may find this document posted on the Region 4 website on the home page under important announcements. Please note the practical advice for parents. In addition, please view the website for the Center for Disease Control for more information on MRSA. (http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_public.html)

The Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 schools have taken precautionary steps as advised by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut River Area Health District, and our medical advisors. Additional precautions have been taken to sanitize those areas of our schools where such an infection is most likely to be contracted. Furthermore, school maintenance personnel have been asked to be especially diligent about maintaining cleaning schedules. We ask for your help with this matter. First, please follow the advice outlined by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. In addition, please notify the school principal of a suspected or confirmed case of MRSA in your family so that the school may take the appropriate safeguards.

Our primary responsibility is the maintenance of a safe and healthy learning environment for the children of Chester, Deep River, and Essex. School personnel will remain vigilant and continue to work with our local health care providers, our medical advisors, and the Connecticut River Area Health District to monitor MRSA. If you have additional questions about MRSA, please contact your physician, your local health department, or the State Department of Public Health MRSA hotline (1-800-830-9426).

Sincerely,

Kim M. Caron
Superintendent of Schools