

## Pine-Richland

November 19, 2007



### School District

[www.pinerichland.org](http://www.pinerichland.org)

#### Administrative Offices

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(724) 625-1490 Fax

#### Special Education/ Psychological Services

(724) 625-7773, ext 6500  
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#### Pine-Richland High

700 Warrendale Road  
Gibsonia • PA 15044  
(724) 625-4444  
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#### Pine-Richland Middle

100 Logan Road  
Gibsonia • PA 15044  
(724) 625-3111  
(724) 625-3144 Fax

#### Hance Elementary

5518 Molnar Drive  
Gibsonia • PA 15044  
(724) 443-1541  
(724) 443-1290 Fax

#### Richland Elementary

3811 Bakerstown Road  
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(724) 443-2180 Fax

#### Wexford Elementary

250 Brown Road  
Wexford • PA 15090  
(724) 935-4631  
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Pine-Richland School District will be launching a special district-wide campaign in December of 2007 to remind our visitors, staff and students about the importance of **"HAND WASHING"**. Diligent hand washing provides an effective means of preventing the spread of many common bacteria and viruses that cause illness, including the influenza or "flu" virus. Influenza is spread when people who have the illness cough or sneeze, expelling tiny droplets of fluid that contain the virus into the air. You can contract the virus by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

As our school nurses coordinate this hand washing campaign, please help them reinforce the importance of personal hygiene with our students by reminding your child to:

- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before eating, after using the rest room, after sneezing, coughing and/or wiping their nose, and after playing outside or sharing exercise or play equipment, especially in gym class.
- Use the hand sanitizing stations that have been placed in the cafeterias.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to address questions that you may have regarding methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or "MRSA", which has been the subject of a number of recent local and national media reports. MRSA is a form of staph infection most commonly transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact and introduced into the body through a break in the skin (cut or scrape). MRSA is resistant to a class of antibiotics commonly used to treat infections. If a diagnosis of MRSA is made, the infection is treated with a different antibiotic. This infection commonly causes boils and soft tissue infection. Symptoms may include redness, pain drainage, discomfort, swelling and areas warm to the touch.

According to the Allegheny County Health Department, the most effective method of preventing the spread of MRSA is diligent personal hygiene such as:

- Washing hands frequently with soap and hot water
- Showering following athletic activity
- Washing personal items (including gym uniforms and towels) daily
- Keeping cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed
- Avoiding shared use of personal items such as towels, razors, clothing and other items that come into contact with bare skin.

To date, PRSD has **no confirmed** cases of MRSA. However, the district continues to take preventative measures including:

- Disinfecting athletic dressing rooms and shower areas
- Installing additional hand dispensers in cafeteria areas
- Cleaning school facilities on a daily basis

The district will continue to consult with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) on appropriate preventative measures against MRSA, as well procedures and actions to be taken in the event of a confirmed case in one of our schools. In the same respect, we encourage you to contact the school nurse if your child tests positive for MRSA, so that appropriate precautionary measures can be taken.

More information about influenza and MRSA can be found on the district website at [www.pinerichland.org](http://www.pinerichland.org) or on the ACHD website at [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net).

Sincerely,

Dr. James C. Manley  
PRSD Superintendent