



Elementary School Custodians Clean for Health

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that is not easily treated with many of the common antibiotics. MRSA can cause skin infections that may look like spider bites, infected turf burns, impetigo, boils or abscesses. It is spread by touching the infection/drainage or by touching surfaces that have come in contact with the infection/drainage. MRSA can stay alive on surfaces for weeks, even months.

Cleaning not only makes our schools look nice, it also helps make schools healthy and safe places for children. Removing “dirt” we can see by cleaning should be done first. Once the dirt we can see is removed, we disinfect, or remove germs, by wiping down surfaces with a school-recommended cleaning product. Germs (bacteria and viruses) are killed during routine cleaning and disinfecting activities. Allergens (mold, pollen, dust mites and other irritants) are removed during cleaning activities like vacuuming, sweeping and mopping.

Our recommendations, listed below, may refer to policies that are already in place, as well as policies that should be developed or adopted.

General Guidance

1. Hard surfaces like floors should be cleaned routinely.
2. “High hand-touch” surfaces such as light switches, door handles, railings, tables, computer keys, and desks should be cleaned routinely.
3. When bodily fluids (such as blood, pus, other drainage) are “spilled,” cleaning and disinfecting, following the blood borne pathogen policy, should be done immediately.

Rest Rooms

1. Warm water should be available to students for hand washing.
2. Soap should be accessible to students from a wall dispenser.
3. *Separate* cleaning mops and buckets should be used to clean and disinfect rest rooms, and that all mops (washable micro-fiber heads or disposable mop cloths preferred) and buckets are cleaned regularly.

Sports Equipment

1. Schedule regular cleanings for sports equipment: balls (football, basketballs, baseballs, softballs, volley balls), racket grips, bats, gloves, pads, etc.
2. Clean and sanitize sports equipment that comes in direct contact with the skin of players, such as gymnastic mats and football helmets.

Frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent MRSA. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that may have come in contact with the MRSA bacteria is necessary to keep the environment healthy.

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