

The School Board of Leon County Administrative Procedures

Procedures posted on this site reflect current administrative practice in Leon County Schools. Other administrative procedures may be found at <http://www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/Procedures/Index.html>.

8453.03 - HANDLING OF SKIN INFECTIONS

Purpose

Common skin infections can be serious if not treated properly. Any open wound may contain bacteria that could pose a public health threat. For the protection of all students, the District has developed the following guidelines and procedures that describe symptoms and treatment of skin infections, when to talk to a health care provider, exclusion criteria, and steps for prevention.

Procedures

A. HOW SKIN INFECTIONS ARE SPREAD

1. Touching infected skin.
2. Touching surfaces that have been contaminated with bacteria or organisms that cause infection.
3. Sharing sports equipment on the field, gym, or training room.
4. Sharing personal hygiene items that have been touched by other people (bar soap, towels, washcloths).
5. Unavailability of resources for personal hygiene.
6. Some skin infections don't spread from person to person. They start when normally present bacteria, viruses, or fungi get into a cut, scrape or other break in the skin.

B. EXCLUSION FOR SUSPECTED SKIN INFECTIONS

1. Only a licensed health care provider can determine the best treatment for skin infections.
2. Any teacher or staff member should refer any student with a suspected skin infection that is spreading, getting worse, or does not appear to be healing. Symptoms of a skin infection may include:
 - a. warmth, tenderness, pain, redness, swelling, itchiness, and drainage of pus or other discharge;
 - b. an infection -- painful, swollen pimples, boils and rashes, for example -- can occur at the site of a cut, scratch, abrasion or other rash, or where there is no obvious break in the skin;

- c. other descriptions may include: "spider bite," "bug bite," abscess or boil, impetigo, or infected turf burn.
3. The school health assistant, under the direction of the school nurse, will contact the parent regarding the need for attention to the wound and possible follow-up with a health care provider.

C. READMITTANCE CRITERIA

1. The student may return to school provided the wound can be covered and contained with a clean, dry dressing, taped on all four (4) sides.
2. At the discretion of the school nurse, a note from a health care provider may be required stating the student is safe to return to school.

D. SPECIAL EXCLUSION CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Any student with wound drainage that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry dressing taped on all four (4) sides.
2. Students who cannot maintain personal hygiene.
3. Athletics/Physical Education: Students with active skin infections should not participate in contact sports until written medical clearance is obtained.

E. INFECTION CONTROL

1. Maintain good wound and skin care by keeping the area clean and dry, washing your hands after caring for the area, and carefully disposing of any bandages.
2. All direct care items and potentially contaminated surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected with District approved cleaning agent.
3. Notify the parent/guardian of any immune-compromised student that there is a diagnosed MRSA case in the immediate classroom. Strict confidentiality must be maintained (no names are released).
4. If a cluster or "outbreak" of skin infections occurs (three (3) or more cases within a classroom or specific group), the school will notify Health Services and District leadership to determine if the Leon County Health Department should be contacted for consultation.

F. PREVENTION

1. Wash hands often with warm, soapy water. Dry hands with disposable paper towels.
2. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available (supervise students).
3. Avoid contact with other people's skin infections (*use Universal Precautions*).

4. Keep cuts, abrasions, burns and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until they have healed. Watch carefully for any signs of infection.
5. Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, washcloths, toothbrushes and razors.
6. Clean potentially contaminated surfaces carefully with District-approved cleaning agents. All cleaning should be done on a regular schedule. Particular attention must be paid to desks, keyboards, phones, doorknobs, and light switches.

G. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SPORTS/PHYSICAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

1. Cover all wounds. If a wound cannot be covered adequately, exclude from practice or competition.
2. Encourage good hygiene, including showering and washing with soap after each practice and competition.
3. Do not share towels or personal items, such as clothing or equipment.
4. Use a barrier (towel or layer of clothing) between the skin and shared equipment, as well as surfaces such as benches.
5. Establish routine disinfectant cleaning of shared surfaces such as wrestling mats, benches, weight room equipment, and shower and locker room areas.
6. Wash athletic clothing after each use.
7. Athletes should report skin lesions to coaches/trainers for evaluation and report findings to school nurse.
8. All athletes and their parents should be informed by coaches/athletic directors of infection control precautionary measures, such as the importance of hand washing, showering immediately after sports activities, and washing practice clothes/uniforms after they are worn once.

See also AP [8450](#) - Management of Communicable Diseases and Casual Contact Illnesses.

© Leon 2013