September 9, 2008

Dear Parents,

As a follow-up to yesterday's letter, this morning I was informed that a student was diagnosed with an infection that tested positive for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). The individual is under the care of their physician and is responding positively to antibiotics.

MRSA is a kind of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as any "staph infection." Mild infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, and 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 does not cause any problems. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes cause infection.

All precautions have been taken at the school in terms of adequate cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces.

The purpose of this letter is not to alarm, but to inform and act as a reminder of the importance of good personal hygiene. The main way to prevent a staph infection is to wash hands frequently and care for any wounds properly.

At Herman L. Horn, as well as all schools in Roanoke County, soap is provided in the bathrooms and at sinks. We encourage all to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and prior to eating.

Should you have any questions, I encourage you to please contact me at school. Our number is 857-5007.

Sincerely,

Susan Brown, Principal
Herman L. Horn Elementary School