



# DELAWARE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

There has been a case of confirmed pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, reported in your school. If your child has been around someone with pertussis, they may become sick with pertussis as well. This is especially true when the child has not received all the pertussis vaccine shots. Sometimes even if a child's shots are up to date, they may still be able to get pertussis.

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by cough. Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough which becomes much worse over 1 -2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs ("coughing fits") followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally no fever. People with pertussis may have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough.

If your child has been in close contact with someone with pertussis and is at increased risk for developing illness, we will contact you and recommend that you contact your child's doctor for antibiotic treatment.

If you have not been personally contacted it means that your child has not had close contact but we wanted to keep you informed. Please consider the following recommendations:

1. Infants younger than one year, and particularly less than six months old, are most likely to experience severe illness if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. ***Infants with any coughing illness should be promptly evaluated by their doctor.***

2. Pertussis vaccine is a 5 dose series that is given at age 2, 4, 6 and 15 months of age. The fifth dose is administered between age 4 and 6. At age 11, a booster is given. ***Talk to your school nurse or pediatrician to make sure your child's vaccinations are up to date.***

3. ***If your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your child's doctor without delay. Tell the doctor there had been a case of Pertussis at your child's school.***

If you have further concerns or questions you may contact your doctor or Delaware County Public Health Services at (607) 832-5200 .