

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY

RE: NOTIFICATION OF WHOOPING COUGH

We have been informed that a student attending our school has contracted Whooping Cough.

DESCRIPTION:

A highly contagious bacterial disease. The may begin with “cold-like symptoms which progress to a cough, or a person may simply begin coughing. After several days, severe coughing bouts may cause vomiting or breathlessness. Sometimes a high-pitched crowing (the whoop) is heard when inhaling. The coughing can last between one and three months. Diagnosis is made by blood test and by culturing specimens from the nose and throat. It is particularly serious in children under two years of age. Transmission is by direct contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person.

INCUBATION PERIOD:

Commonly – 7 to 10 days and rarely more than 14 days.

INFECTIOUS PERIOD:

Highly contagious in the early stages. The person is no longer infectious to others five days after starting antibiotic treatment.

Parents, friends and contacts of the infected person should be notified of their exposure and advised to watch for symptoms.

If any symptoms develop, a doctor should be contacted immediately.

CONTROL OF SPREAD:

1. A person with whooping cough should be excluded until well and after appropriate medical treatment. The person is no longer infectious to others five days after starting antibiotic treatment.
2. Unimmunised household contacts aged less than seven years should be excluded for 14 days, or until they have been on antibiotic treatment for at least five days of a minimum 14 day course of antibiotics.

PREVENTION:

Protection from whooping cough is best achieved through adequate immunization with DTP (triple Antigen) vaccine starting at age two months.

Adults and teenagers are susceptible to the illness as well and may carry the bacteria while exhibiting only mild symptoms.

Fully immunized communication offers the best protection against whooping cough.