



November 20, 2013

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff

There has been a confirmed case of Pertussis, or whooping cough, at your child's school. The affected person is being treated and is not in school. Pertussis is treatable with antibiotics. People in close contact with children or adults diagnosed with pertussis may also need to be treated with antibiotics.

Pertussis is caused by a bacterium that lives in the mouth, nose and throat. The germ is highly contagious and can be easily spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing.

Even though you or your child may have been vaccinated to prevent Pertussis, immunity does not always last a lifetime. Over the past few years, there has been a reoccurrence of the disease after the protective effects of the vaccine have diminished.

The health services program of the Rockford Public Schools would like to remind you to be alert for the symptoms of this disease. Early signs and symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Low-grade fever
- Cough; if untreated, gradually becomes severe and increases at night; vomiting may occur

Transmission of pertussis can be greatly reduced using the following strategies:

- Frequent hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing
- Covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Disposing of used tissues properly

If you notice any of these symptoms in you or your child, you are advised to:

- Contact your physician
- Stay home from work or school
- Notify school or your employer

If you have any questions, please call the nurse at your child's school, the Rockford Public Schools Health Services Office at 815-966-5254, or the Winnebago County Health Department at 815-720-4000. To learn more about Pertussis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/pertussis.

Sincerely,

Mary Fisher, RN
Health Services Supervisor