

WAPPINGERS

Central School District



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G. Thomas Stella, Principal



May 16, 2016

Dear Parents, Guardians Faculty and Staff:

We have identified 2 confirmed cases of pertussis (whooping cough) in our school. If you have been around someone with pertussis, you may become sick with pertussis as well. This is especially true when people have not been fully vaccinated. Sometimes even if vaccines are up to date, a person may still be able to get pertussis. **There is a new vaccine called Tdap that can boost protection against pertussis. It is highly recommended for all persons over the age of 11 years who have received the primary pertussis containing vaccine series. Tdap is now approved for all adults.**

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 only a slight 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 to calm the cough.

The incubation period for pertussis is 7 – 21 days. Persons are infectious for only the first 3 weeks following the onset of cough, even without antibiotics. Persons who receive 5 days of appropriate antibiotics cannot spread pertussis even when the cough continues. All persons having close contact, (household members, persons sharing food or beverages or kissing) of a known infected person should receive preventative antibiotic treatment from their primary care provider.

If you or your child has been in close contact with someone with pertussis, antibiotics may prevent pertussis infection. If it is longer than 21 days since the exposure, antibiotics will not prevent infection. If you or your child is already having any of the symptoms described above, you should consult with a health care provider. Giving antibiotics early can help someone get well faster and lower the chances of spreading the infection to others. **Persons diagnosed with confirmed or suspected pertussis should not return to school until they have completed 5 days of antibiotic treatment**

Please consider the following Department of Health recommendations:

1. Infants under one year old, especially those under six months, are most likely to have severe symptoms if they develop pertussis. When possible, young infants should be kept away from people with a cough. **Infants with any coughing illness should be seen promptly by their doctor.**
2. The primary pertussis vaccine series is given to children under 7 years old. If you have children less than 7 years of age who have not been completely immunized against pertussis (particularly infants under one year) we recommend you talk to your child's health care provider about the benefits of vaccination. **Persons 7 years and older can benefit from a new vaccine against pertussis known as Tdap.** Receiving this vaccine will not provide protection from this exposure but will provide future protection. Pertussis is a persistent problem in our community.

3. If you or your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, talk to your child's health care provider. Tell the doctor that pertussis has been seen in your child's school.

If you have further concerns or questions, please call your doctor or the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health at: 845-486-3402. You may also visit this link <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/fs-parents.html>

Please bring a copy of this letter with you if you go to a medical provider.

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