



# Huntley Community School District 158

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August 26, 2016

Marlowe Middle School parents,

This letter is to inform you of a single confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough) at our school. We are working closely with the McHenry Department of Health to ensure that our school remains a healthy and safe environment for students and staff. While this is only a single case, we want to provide you information on about the infection, our response, and steps recommended by the Health Department for families.

## What is pertussis (whooping cough)?

Pertussis is a contagious and fairly common bacterial infection that generally does not usually cause severe disease in older children and adults. However, infected children and adults may pass the disease to infants, the elderly and persons with other health conditions. Students who have received the Tdap vaccine are strongly protected against the infection.

## Our response

- Per CDC guidelines, the student with the confirmed case will be held out of school for the duration of the contagious period.
- Students who have received the Tdap vaccine are strongly protected against the infection. If your child has not been vaccinated, you may contact the MCDH at (815) 334-4500 for more information or to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.
- Staff have received information on the illness and will refer students/staff members showing possible symptoms of the illness to the school nurse for follow-up.
- The infection is generally spread through close contact with mouth or nose secretions (coughing and sneezing) and less often by direct hand contact with contaminated secretions. Staff and students are encouraged to practice strong hand washing and respiratory hygiene (using and disposing of tissues).

## Recommendations for families

- If your child has not been vaccinated, you may contact the MCDH at (815) 334-4500 for more information or to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.
- Be on the lookout for cold-like symptoms, which often appear between 5-10 but sometimes up to 21 days following: runny nose, low-grade fever and a mild occasional cough which can become severe and spasmodic and can progress to vomiting.
- Symptomatic students should be referred for medical evaluation.
- Immunocompromised and unvaccinated individuals that may have been exposed to Pertussis should be referred to their physician.
- Remind your students that sharing drinks, utensils and cosmetics such as lip gloss is not hygienic.
- Read the attached FAQs from the Health Department for further information.

If you have any further questions, you may contact the McHenry County Department of Health Communicable Disease Program at (815) 334-4500.

Thank you,

Henry Soltesz  
Principal

Michele Knaizer  
School Nurse