



Educating for Life's Journey

Holy Infant School
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December 4, 2009 (Rev. 8:15 a.m.)

Dear Parent,

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease spread through the air by cough, and is required to be reported to the health department. Recently there have been seven confirmed cases of pertussis (whooping cough) at Holy Infant School. As of today there are 14 additional cases suspected. See the pertussis fact sheet on the school website for detailed information.

The following recommendations are strongly encouraged by the St. Louis County Department of Health:

1. **Seek medical help.** If you or your child comes down with cold symptoms that include a cough, especially "fits" of coughing, difficulty catching a breath following coughing, or coughing that leads to vomiting, talk to your child's doctor without delay. Because of current circumstances, any cough lasting seven days or more should be investigated. Explain that our school is experiencing an outbreak of pertussis (whooping cough) primarily at the 4th grade level.

The following steps will help lower the chances of spreading the disease to others:

- Get tested for pertussis (nasopharyngeal specimen) by your doctor
 - Start and complete effective antibiotic treatment for pertussis
 - Stay home until you have finished the first five days of antibiotics to be certain you are no longer contagious
2. **Keep individuals with a cough illness away from infants.** If your infant is exposed to pertussis notify their physician without delay. **A doctor should promptly evaluate infants with any coughing illness.**
 3. **Tdap (Pertussis) vaccine for adolescents and adults.** Consult with your child's physician to make certain your child is up to date on their pertussis immunization. It is also recommended that children 11 years or older receive a single dose of Tdap at this time.

Incidentally, every child affected by pertussis was fully immunized. These cases are considered breakthrough cases, meaning the immunity weakened over time.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please consult your child's physician or the St. Louis County Health Department at 314-615-1630.

Sincerely,

Sr. Rosario Delaney

Barbara Ford, R.N.

Anne Hildebrand, R.N.