

## PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)

### NOTICE TO PARENTS

DATE OF EXPOSURE \_\_\_\_\_

This is to notify you that your child may have been exposed to a case of Pertussis (Whooping Cough). It is highly communicable disease that lasts for many weeks. If your child has or develops the series of symptoms listed below within the next 14 days, please contact your child's medical provider for diagnosis and treatment.

**School policy excludes children from school until antibiotic treatment is well under way. Secondly, the child should be feeling well and the cough manageable. The full course of antibiotics must be completed to prevent relapse. If antibiotics are not given or not completed the child must be excluded for 21 days. A note from the physician is recommended for school entrance. If your child is diagnosed with this disease please notify the school nurse immediately.**

Pertussis is a vaccine preventable disease. Protection from the vaccine or the disease lasts about three-four years and then wanes with time. Pertussis is most severe in the first year of life, particularly for pre-term infants.

CAUSATIVE AGENT: A bacterium, Bordetella Pertussis.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: Symptoms start with a low-grade fever, runny nose and cough that becomes progressively more severe. The severe coughing may persist for up to 10 weeks. The characteristic "whoop" during the coughing, which occurs in young children, may not be present in older children or adults.

INCUBATION PERIOD: Usually 7 to 10 days after exposure, but can be up to 21 days.

COMMUNICABILITY: Most contagious during the catarrhal (cold-like) stage, before the onset of spasmodic coughing. Infectiousness may continue for 3 weeks (21 days) if not treated with antibiotics.

METHOD OF TRANSMISSION: Airborne by coughing, sneezing or exposure to nose and throat secretions.

PREVENTION: Childhood immunization wears off after 10 years (administered between 4-6 years old). A booster vaccine has been approved by the FDA and is available and recommended for adolescents.

For more information contact your health care provider, your School Nurse, the Marin County Health Department, or [http:// www.cdc.gov/health/pertussis.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/health/pertussis.htm)