



**SUNSHINE COAST PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT**

Enquiries to: Public Health Nurse

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2 December 2015

Dear Parents and Staff,

**Re: Whooping Cough (Bordetella Pertussis)**

The Sunshine Coast Public Health Unit has been notified of several confirmed cases of whooping cough in students of various year levels attending Woombye State School.

Whooping cough is a highly infectious illness that is spread by coughing and sneezing. The illness is troublesome and distressing at any age but can be very serious in young infants.

Vaccination gives good protection to young children, but unfortunately, this protection does wane with time.

**Even vaccinated children may develop, and spread, whooping cough.**

The following precautions are recommended to minimise spread of whooping cough in your school:

- We recommend that anyone who develops a **cough that is unusual for them** should see their local doctor immediately. **Please take this letter with you to your doctor.** Students with symptoms **should not attend school** until their Doctor has advised them they are able to. Early diagnosis and treatment of this illness is important to limit the spread of whooping cough in the school and the community. **If the illness is detected early in its course, treatment will reduce the period of infectivity for other people.**
- The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend that all cases of whooping cough are excluded from school until they have received **five days** of an appropriate antibiotic or be excluded for a period of **21 days** from onset of cough.
- It is very important to ensure that all young children are up to date with their vaccinations. Protection against whooping cough is included in the routine vaccinations given to children at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and at 4 years. **If younger children have missed any of these vaccinations, they can still receive a free vaccine against whooping cough up until their 10th birthday.**
- There are two vaccines available, Boostrix and Adacel, that provide a booster vaccination for pertussis, tetanus and diphtheria for people 10 years of age or older. Boostrix is funded and free for 13 and 15 year olds this year and Adacel vaccine is funded for women in the 3rd trimester of their pregnancy. Boostrix or Adacel is recommended but not funded for prospective fathers, new parents, grandparents and all people who care for young children. The vaccine costs about \$50.

A fact sheet on whooping cough is available from your school office, your GP or on the Qld Health website.

Yours sincerely

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