

[DATE]

[ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP]

[PHONE NUMBER]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

[A/AN CHILD/EMPLOYEE] in your child’s [SCHOOL/CLASSROOM] has been [DIAGNOSED WITH/ EXPOSED TO] pertussis, also known as whooping cough. As a result we are working closely with the Bay County Health Department in response and would like to give you some information.

Pertussis can be a very serious illness, especially in the very young who have not been vaccinated yet. The disease is caused by a bacteria spread through sneezing and coughing. In the early stage of illness, it can resemble a common cold. After about 1 to 2 weeks, more serious “coughing spells” develop that can last for more than a minute and result in difficulty breathing. At the end of a coughing spell, the child may make a high pitched “whooping” sound as they try to catch their breath.

Fortunately, vaccinations have made it a rare disease. Many children have been protected against it through their routine immunizations. However, protection from the vaccine tends to fade over time. If your child is older than 10, they may need a booster vaccine.

Please check your child’s records. If your child is not fully protected please contact your doctor to have them immunized. Children who have not had a full course of pertussis vaccinations may be excluded from school if the disease is known to be present. Please inform the school of any updates in your child’s records so they can be documented and to prevent such exclusions.

Pertussis can be treated or even prevented with antibiotics if detected early or before the disease has started. If your child has been exposed please contact your doctor for protective treatment. If your child does develop any of the symptoms described above, ***keep him or her at home*** ***from school*** and contact your doctor immediately. Please also inform the school of any illness.

Please refer to the Fact Sheet for more information. If you have any questions please call the Bay County Health Department at 989-895-4003.

Thank you,

NAME, TITLE