



Rev. John P. Gierke, Pastor

## ***St. Paul Lutheran School***

325 North Colfax Street  
West Point, Nebraska 68788  
(402)372-2355 phone  
(402)372.2742 fax  
www.stpaulwp.org  
[stpaulschool@stpaulwpne.org](mailto:stpaulschool@stpaulwpne.org)



Susan Quick, Principal

December 9, 2024



Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have been exposed to whooping cough (pertussis). Since Friday, December 6th, the Nebraska DHHS Health Department has seen an increased number of whooping cough cases in West Point. Whooping cough is an infection that affects the airways. The bacteria that cause whooping cough can easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Whooping cough can cause a severe cough that lasts weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits or vomiting. Anyone can get whooping cough, but can be dangerous for babies and people with certain health conditions that may be worse with whooping cough. Family members with whooping cough, especially siblings and parents, can spread pertussis to babies.

### **What does this mean for our school & students?**

Recommendations from the CDC:

1. If your child has a cough:
  - a. Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups. See items 4 and 5 about when your child can return to these activities.
  - b. Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to whooping cough.
2. If your child has a health condition that may be worse with whooping cough, such as asthma, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics to your child as soon as possible to prevent whooping cough. Doctors should give antibiotics to a child with certain health conditions if they may have been exposed to whooping cough, even if he or she is not coughing.
3. If your child lives with any of the following people, ask your child's doctor to prescribe antibiotics as soon as possible to your child, even if he or she is not coughing:
  - a. A woman who is pregnant
  - b. A baby younger than 12 months old
  - c. Anyone with health conditions that may be worse with whooping cough, such as asthma.

4. If your child has been diagnosed with whooping cough by his or her doctor:
  - a. Tell the school that a doctor diagnosed your child with whooping cough.
  - b. School officials may request that you keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or play groups, until your child has been on appropriate antibiotics for five days to treat whooping cough.
  - c. Ask your child's doctor for a note that states your child has whooping cough and when your child can return to school and other activities.
  
5. If your child's doctor says your child does NOT have whooping cough:
  - a. Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school that your child's cough is NOT whooping cough and that your child can return to school and other activities at any time.

Please make sure your family's whooping cough vaccinations are up to date. Protection against whooping cough from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a whooping cough booster shot called "Tdap" to help protect themselves and babies. If you need Tdap, contact your doctor or call Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department to find a vaccine provider near you. If you take your child to a doctor for whooping cough, please show this letter to him or her.

**As a reminder, your child must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours prior to returning to school per our school policy.**

If you have any further questions or concerns, please call us at 402-372-2355.

**We will be postponing our family \$5 meal from Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup> to Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, pizza will be ordered for our students.**

In HIS grace,

*Susan Quick*

Mrs. Susan Quick  
Principal  
St Paul Lutheran School

Enclosures: CDC Whooping Cough Information

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