

December 16, 2011

Dear Parent,

I have been notified of a probable case of pertussis (“whooping cough”) in our school community. Pertussis is a disease caused by bacteria that is spread by droplets when an infected person coughs. Based on the recommendation of the Gwinnett County Health Department, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide additional information to the parents of our students because there have been reports of an increase in the number of cases of pertussis in the United States.

Pertussis begins with cold symptoms and a cough that worsens over one to two weeks. Generally, children do not develop fever with pertussis. People with pertussis may have a long series of coughs (coughing fits) followed by vomiting or difficulty catching their breath. Children and adults may contract pertussis even if they have been vaccinated against pertussis; however, the disease is usually milder in people who have been vaccinated. It is currently recommended that children ages 11 or 12 receive a pertussis booster as pertussis immunity is not lifelong. It is also recommended that older children and adults receive pertussis vaccine. You should contact your doctor or the Health Department for additional information about this vaccine.

Please monitor your child’s health for the next three weeks. If (s)he develops cold symptoms with a cough, the child should be evaluated by their doctor. Be sure to inform the child’s doctor that there has been a probable case of pertussis in our community.

Thank you for your cooperation. Working together and staying informed, we can ensure that our school community is a healthy one for our students.

For additional information, contact your health care professional or the Gwinnett County Department of Health at (770) 339-4260.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Holland
Principal