



# Hednesford Valley High

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15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have been informed that there has been a “potential” case of whooping cough in a school pupil. The UK Health Security Agency has provided the following advice:

Whooping cough, also called pertussis, is a bacterial infection of the lungs and airways, which can be spread by cough or sneeze of someone with the infection. It can cause repeated coughing bouts that can last for two to three months or more and can make young children and babies in particular, very unwell.

Most fit children and adults recover fully from whooping cough, even without treatment. A major concern however is that whooping cough can be a very serious illness, particularly in very young babies (who are simply too young to have had their routine immunisations) and in other unimmunised young children.

It is important to ensure that your child is fully up to date with their ‘whooping cough’ vaccines. All children are recommended to receive three doses of whooping cough vaccine at 2, 3 and 4 months of age, plus a pre-school booster dose from 3 years 4 months. You can check this with your GP surgery, if you are not sure. Pregnant mothers are offered vaccination as it protects their babies until they receive vaccination.

Antibiotics are sometimes given to those with whooping cough and may reduce the illness and shorten the period when the person is infectious to others. After three weeks from the onset of symptoms antibiotics are unlikely to be of benefit as the person is no longer likely to be infectious.

**If you suspect your child or someone in your household may have whooping cough they should see their GP and:**

- **stay away from school/nursery for 48 hours from commencing antibiotics and**
- **as a precaution, avoid contact with pregnant ladies or young babies under 6 months of age until 48 hours after commencing antibiotics.**

Further information about whooping cough, how it spreads and be prevented, can be found on the NHS Choices website : <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/whooping-cough/>

By working together, I am sure that we can ensure the health and wellbeing of all.

Your sincerely,

Mr SJ Stokes  
Headteacher

