

# Williamson County Schools

## Pertussis Information

### What is pertussis?

- Pertussis is a highly contagious illness that begins with mild, cold-like symptoms including cough and runny nose.
- These first symptoms typically appear 7-10 days after a person is exposed. The cough typically worsens over the following weeks and becomes spasmodic. The cough may be followed by a “whooping” sound. The spasms of cough may be followed by vomiting.
- Some persons with pertussis may have very mild symptoms (mild cough with no other symptoms) and may not realize that they are sick or contagious.
- Pertussis is most severe in infants and can cause death.

### How is pertussis spread?

- Pertussis is spread through coughing or sneezing.
- It can also be spread by touching a tissue or sharing a cup used by someone with pertussis.

### How is pertussis treated?

- Pertussis is treated with antibiotics.

### If pertussis is suspected or diagnosed

- Please watch your child for any symptoms of pertussis (mild, cold-like symptoms). If you notice any of these symptoms in your child, please notify your physician, school nurse or county health department.
- Students who are prescribed antibiotics for suspected pertussis can return to school following the fifth day of treatment, or when cleared by a physician.
- Without antibiotics, a person with pertussis is considered to be contagious for three weeks.
- It is important that ill students stay at home away from others (especially infants and young children).

### Pertussis vaccine

- Pertussis vaccine is administered in combination with diphtheria and tetanus vaccine (DTaP) in a five-dose series and protects children against whooping cough.
- A booster is given prior to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Please check with your health care provider to ensure your child's shots are current.