



MCGANN~MERCY DIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOL

1225 Ostrander Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901
631-727-5900
www.mcgann-mercy.org

February 2, 2102

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to inform you that there has been a confirmed case of Pertussis at Bishop McGann-Mercy High School. Pertussis is more commonly known as whooping cough. Although all of our students have been immunized for whooping cough at birth and many have even had booster immunizations, it is important to know that it is a highly contagious disease spread through the air by cough. While there is a less to no concern for our students, we are particularly concerned for those who are more vulnerable, i.e., infants who are not completely vaccinated, the elderly, and those whose immune system is compromised.

Please see the attached letter from the County Department of Health.

If you would like further information as to the nature of the disease, communicability, symptoms, testing, etc., please consult with your physician, the Suffolk Division of Disease Control at (631) 853-3055 or the CDC at (www.cdc.gov).

Early treatment with the appropriate antibiotic for the symptomatic student, members of their family, contacts, etc. (especially infants, elderly, etc.) will eliminate disease transmission and may reduce disease severity in the child.

Again, we want to bring this to your attention so that you may be aware and attentive to the symptoms and take necessary precautions.

Sincerely yours,

Carl Semmler
Principal

enclosure

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner

Dear Parents and Staff,

February 1, 2012

This letter is to inform you that there has been a case of Pertussis illness at Bishop McGann-Mercy Diocesan High School. Suffolk County has seen an increase in Pertussis, also known as "whooping cough", a highly contagious bacterial respiratory disease that is spread through the air by cough and sneeze. Individuals may still develop Pertussis even if they are up to date with their vaccinations as immunity to Pertussis wanes over the years. Up to date vaccination against Pertussis, however, remains the best defense to prevent illness. Pertussis disease is particularly dangerous to infants who are not fully immunized. There are 3 stages of Pertussis infection:

Stage 1: Mild upper respiratory symptoms, low-grade fever, slight cough (mimics a cold, lasts 1-2 weeks).

Stage 2: As the disease progresses, the traditional symptoms of Pertussis appear and include: paroxysms (fits) of many, rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop", vomiting, and exhaustion after coughing fits. Coughing may occur more often at night. The illness can be milder (less severe) and the typical "whoop" absent in vaccinated children, teens, and adults.

Stage 3: Although the infection is not contagious after appropriate antibiotic treatment, coughing episodes may persist for up to 10 weeks.

Symptoms of pertussis usually develop within 7 – 10 days after exposure, but sometimes may take up to 6 weeks. If you observe these symptoms in your child, contact his/her pediatrician/ health care provider and request that your child be tested for Pertussis with a special nasal-throat swab. This test can be performed at either the doctor's office or hospital emergency room. **Early treatment with the appropriate antibiotic for a symptomatic child and antibiotic prophylaxis for his/her asymptomatic family (not currently showing symptoms), will eliminate disease transmission and may reduce disease severity.**

If your child's health care provider suspects a diagnosis of Pertussis, orders testing and prescribes antibiotics, your child should remain home until he/she has completed five days of his/her antibiotic treatment.

For additional information on Pertussis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. Parents or their physician may contact the Division of Disease Control at 631-853-3055 if they have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lauren Barlow, MS, RN
Division of Public Health

Dennis Russo, MD
Division of Public Health



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
225 Rabro Drive, Hauppauge, NY 11788 (631) 853-3055 FAX: (631) 853-3073