



HAYWOOD COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

157 Paragon Parkway, Clyde, NC 28721-9481

TALMADGE STONE BLEVINS,

Health and Human Services Agency Director/Assistant County Manager

PATRICK H. JOHNSON, RN-C, MPA, Public Health Services Director

828-356-2244

Dear Parent or Guardian:

A student at Pisgah High School has been diagnosed with pertussis (whooping cough). The Haywood County Health & Human Services Public Health Division is working to identify students who may have been exposed to this student. *If your child is identified as having close contact to this student, you will be notified by phone by Haywood County Health and Human Services.*

Hundreds of cases of pertussis are reported each year in North Carolina. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. It causes a severe cough that can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis can spread it to newborns. Additional information about pertussis is provided in the attached document and can be found on the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>).

Please monitor your child for 21 days for the following symptoms: runny or stuffed up nose, coughing very hard over and over, gasping for breath after a coughing fit and vomiting after coughing. Occasionally, a "whoop" sound may occur upon inhaling. If your child develops these symptoms, contact your medical provider for evaluation.

The best protection against pertussis is vaccination. Make sure your family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. If you need the Tdap vaccine, contact your doctor or the Haywood Health & Human Services Public Health Division at (828) 452-6675.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Haywood Health & Human Services Public Health Division at (828) 356-2235 or (828) 356-2253; or the school nurse at (828) 646-3440.

Sincerely,

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