



Wiley Park Public School

Denman Avenue

Wiley Park NSW 2195

PH: 9750 0144

E: wileypark-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

6 September 2024

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT – Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Dear Parents/Carers

NSW Health advises that whooping cough (sometimes called pertussis) is circulating at high levels in NSW and affecting school aged children in particular, with incidence highest among children aged 10 to 14 years old, followed by 5 to 9 year olds.

Whooping cough is a serious respiratory illness. It is highly contagious and spreads easily between kids and families.

It can be life threatening for babies, especially newborns.

Whooping cough usually begins like a cold, with early symptoms including a cough, mild fever, tiredness and blocked or runny nose. The cough will usually get much worse and may progress to severe coughing fits that can last for many weeks. Intense and rapid coughing fits can be followed by gasping and a 'whoop' sound.

Whooping cough is spread in the air as droplets, usually by coughing or sneezing. Vaccination provides the best protection from whooping cough.

To help stop the spread of whooping cough, NSW Health recommends :

- Children who are sick (including those with cold and flu symptoms) stay home and away from other children until their symptoms have resolved or as directed by their doctor.
- If a child is diagnosed with whooping cough, they should stay home for 5 days after they start antibiotics, or 21 days after their cough starts.
- Parents seek treatment and testing advice through their GP when their child has symptoms of whooping cough. Parents can also call **healthdirect** for advice on 1800 022 222 (day or night).
- Parents can help protect their children by making sure all their children are vaccinated on time.
- It is very important for pregnant women to be vaccinated during each pregnancy to protect the new baby in its first few months of life when it is too young to be protected by vaccination.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Demos
Principal