

October 21, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Washoe County Health District (WCHD) has seen an increase in the number of reported pertussis cases among students at Bishop Manogue Catholic High School. As a result, WCHD and Bishop Manogue Catholic High School jointly decided to close the school from October 22, 2019-October 27, 2019. In addition, school activities will be ceased from October 22, 2019-November 1, 2019.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough) at Bishop Manogue Catholic High School. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis can produce a severe cough that can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis, especially mothers, can spread pertussis to newborns.

Because of your child's recent exposure to pertussis, WCHD has the following recommendations:

1. If your child has a cough:
 - a. Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or gatherings/events. See item 1.c.ii about when your child can return to these activities.
 - b. Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to pertussis.
 - c. If your child has been diagnosed with pertussis by his or her doctor:
 - i. Tell Bishop Manogue High School that your child has been diagnosed with pertussis.
 - ii. Bishop Manogue High School officials and WCHD will request that you keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports or gatherings/events, until your child has completed antibiotics for five days to treat pertussis.
 - iii. Ask your child's doctor for a note that states your child has pertussis.
 - d. If your child's doctor says your child does NOT have pertussis:
 - i. Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school that your child's cough is NOT pertussis and that your child can return to school and other activities at any time.
2. Even if your child is not coughing, they may be infected but have not yet developed symptoms, WCHD is requesting you to ask your child's doctor to prescribe an appropriate antibiotic to prevent those infected from progressing to illness. Please take the entire course of antibiotics as prescribed by the doctor.

Please 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. You can check on the immunization status of yourself or your child by visiting <https://izrecord.nv.gov>. If you need the Tdap vaccine, contact your doctor or check the WCHD website (www.washoecounty.us/health/cchs/imm.html) to find a vaccine provider near you..

If you plan on bringing your symptomatic child to a healthcare provider to rule out pertussis, please ensure your child wears a mask, to control the spread of disease. In addition, for guidance regarding treatment for pertussis, please see the provided WCHD recommendation letter AND give this information to your provider. If you

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have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 775-328-2447. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with stopping the spread of this illness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randall L. Todd".

Randall Todd, DrPH
Director, Division of Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness
Washoe County Health District