



September 16, 2010

Dear KCSD parents:

Thank you for your continued assistance with measures to help protect our students' health. Now that the school year is underway, I want to urge you to remind your children to practice good health habits including frequent hand washing.

DHEC has issued the attached fact sheet on pertussis (whooping cough) that is being seen in increasing amounts in our state and across the nation. Pertussis is spread through the air when infected people cough. In adolescents and adults, pertussis is an illness with a long lasting cough.

Pertussis symptoms have two stages:

- The first stage begins like a cold with a runny nose, sneezing, and cough. The cough lasts for a week or two and then slowly gets worse.
- The second stage is marked by uncontrolled coughing spells and a whooping noise (in young children) when the person inhales. During severe coughing spells, a person may vomit or become blue in the face from lack of air. Between spells, the person often appears to be well. This stage lasts for four to six weeks.

If your child has symptoms of pertussis (cold symptoms, persistent cough, etc), have him/her evaluated immediately by your healthcare provider for pertussis. Antibiotics early in the course of the disease may decrease the severity of symptoms. Students with newly identified cases of pertussis will be excluded from school unless they have completed 5 days of antibiotics or have been coughing longer than 21 days.

In addition, you may want to talk with your health care provider to see if your student needs to boost his/her Tdap (tetanus/diphtheria) vaccine. Although this was not mandated this school year, DHEC highly recommended it for 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Adults who are in contact with young babies may also want to talk with their doctors to see if they need to boost their vaccines to protect the infants.

If you have any questions, please contact your local health professional or your school nurse.

Sincerely,

*Frank E. Morgan*

Frank E. Morgan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent