

24th April 2026

Dear Parents/Carer

There has been a rise in the number of cases of whooping cough seen in England recently. This letter describes what whooping cough is, how it spreads, and when you should get vaccinated to prevent whooping cough.

What whooping cough is

Whooping cough is caused by the 'pertussis' bacteria (bug) and can spread between people quite easily. You can get whooping cough at any age, but it can make babies in particular very unwell. Whooping cough can be treated with antibiotics. More information about whooping cough is available on the NHS website: Whooping cough - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

How whooping cough spreads

- You can catch whooping cough through close contact with someone who has whooping cough when they are coughing or sneezing.
- If you are diagnosed with whooping cough, you or your child should stay off school, work or nursery until 48 hours after starting antibiotics, or 2 weeks after your cough started if you've not had antibiotics.
- If you're a healthcare or nursery worker and work with young babies or pregnant women, stay off work for 3 weeks after your cough started if you've not had antibiotics.

Preventing whooping cough

The best way to prevent whooping cough is through vaccination. You should get vaccinated against whooping cough if you are pregnant; this will protect your baby when they are born. You should speak to your midwife or other healthcare provider for more information.

Babies and children in the UK are vaccinated against whooping cough during their childhood vaccination schedule. If you think your child has missed any of their vaccinations against whooping cough, they can receive catch up vaccinations for protection against whooping cough until they are 10 years old. Contact your child's GP to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely



Zoe Barry
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