Thursday, 9 June 2011
Dear Parents and Staff,

**Pertussis (whooping cough)**

The Public Health Unit, Albury, has notification of a confirmed case of whooping cough at Walbundrie Public School. It is possible there are other cases in staff or pupils, who have not been diagnosed. **You may not have even suspected that an illness with a mild cough in a person who appears otherwise fit and well, could in fact be whooping cough. But without treatment a person can spread the infection to other people for up to 3 weeks.**

**What is pertussis?**
Pertussis is an infection of the throat that can cause bouts of coughing, and sometimes breathing difficulties and vomiting. It can be a very serious infection in small children. The illness can last for many weeks. It usually starts with a snuffle or a cold.

**What should people sick with pertussis do?**
If you or your child develops symptoms, please take this letter with you to see your local doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor can advise whether pertussis is likely and arrange for early treatment if needed. Treating people who have pertussis with antibiotics can stop the infection spreading, but is more effective if started early.

To help prevent this infection spreading, people who have been diagnosed with pertussis should not attend work, school, childcare or preschool until they have completed the first 5 days of a course of the recommended antibiotics. If antibiotics cannot be taken, then they must stay away for 3 weeks after onset of the cough.

**How is it prevented?**
Vaccination is the most important way of reducing pertussis in our community. It is important to double check that your child is fully up to date with his or her immunisations against pertussis. If in doubt, please ask your doctor to check. Adults who work with children or pregnant women should also have the adult booster for pertussis. Unfortunately, a number of children and adults may still get whooping cough even though they are fully immunised.

**Need more information?**

Yours sincerely

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