# [school letterhead]

[Date]

### Potential Exposure to Pertussis

Dear Staff, Student, or Parent/Legal Guardian,

We are writing to inform you that a case of pertussis (whooping cough) has been identified in an individual in your [child’s childcare center/school] and that you/your child may have been exposed to the illness.

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease that is spread through the air by coughing. Pertussis usually begins with cold-like symptoms and a cough that worsens over 1-2 weeks.  Symptoms may include coughing “fits” followed by a “whooping” noise, vomiting, cyanosis (turning blue) or the inability to catch one’s breath.  The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help eliminate the cough.  Usually, persons infected with pertussis do not have a fever. In older children and adults, the symptoms may be only a persistent cough which is worse at night. **Pertussis can affect people of all ages, but can be very serious, even deadly, for infants less than a year old.**

**We recommend the following for anyone that may have been exposed to pertussis:**

* Monitor yourself/your child for signs of pertussis.If symptoms of a respiratory illness develop, it is important to be evaluated promptly for potential pertussis infection.
* If you are pregnant or have a child less than a year old who was potentially exposed, speak with your doctor about antibiotics even if you/your child do not have any symptoms. When taken promptly following exposure, these antibiotics may prevent the development of pertussis illness or decrease its severity.
* Ensure you/your child’s immunizations are up to date. Although vaccinated individuals may still contract pertussis, **vaccination is the best way of preventing pertussis, and can reduce the severity of disease in infected persons.** In addition to routine childhood immunizations, a pertussis vaccine booster may also be recommended for some adolescents and adults.
* If you see your doctor for any of the reasons listed above, please show them this letter at your visit.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call [school contact] at [phone number].