Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

To: Parents at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School

From: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Re: Possible Exposure to Pertussis

This is to inform you that your child may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough) at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of school) in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (grade/classroom). In addition, you should be aware that pertussis is widespread throughout Waukesha County and the State of Wisconsin. See the Pertussis Fact Sheet for information about the disease.

Pertussis is usually spread by repeated indoor face-to-face contact or close contact for an hour or more with someone who is sick with the disease. Examples of persons who are likely to catch pertussis are people in the same household, close friends and people in a regular carpool.

Anyone, even someone who doesn’t know they were exposed to pertussis, should see a doctor if they have one or more of the following symptoms:

* A cough that is lasting more than a week
* A long series of coughing that makes it difficult to catch your breath (coughing fits)
* Coughing fits that are followed by a whooping noise or vomiting

Some people are at greater risk for serious illness from pertussis. People who have pertussis or have symptoms of pertussis should avoid contact with the following high risk individuals:

* **Infants under one year of age; infants are more likely to become seriously ill, need hospitalization and are more likely to die from pertussis**
* Pregnant women who are in their 3rd trimester (newborn infant is at high risk of serious illness)
* Persons who are immunocompromised, have chronic lung disease (including asthma), or have neuromuscular diseases that make it difficult to swallow

If a person from one of the high risk categories above is exposed to pertussis, s/he should contact their physician to discuss getting antibiotics to prevent pertussis.

 REMEMBER THE **“A-B-V’s”** OF PERTUSSIS

 **A**ntibiotics are available to prevent and treat pertussis

 **B**abies are at high risk of serious illness if they catch pertussis

 **V**accination is the best protection against pertussis (See Fact Sheet for schedule)

If you have any questions, please contact your doctor or the Waukesha County Public Health Division, Nurse Call Center at 262-896-8430.