



**Health**

Illawarra Shoalhaven  
Local Health District  
Public Health Unit

14 June 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian

A student from **Ulladulla High School** has been diagnosed with pertussis (whooping cough). I am writing to provide advice and to ask that you watch out for the symptoms of pertussis in your child, especially over the next 3 weeks.

### **What is pertussis?**

Pertussis is an infection of the respiratory tract that can cause bouts of coughing, 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 who are sick with pertussis do?**

If your child or a family member develops symptoms, contact your family doctor as soon as possible and take this letter with you.

This is extremely important if there is a baby less than 12 months of age living in your household.

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 child care, school or work 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.

NSW Health recommends adult booster vaccine every 10 years to protect from Diphtheria, Tetanus and Whooping Cough.

### **Need more information?**

For more information, please see the Pertussis Factsheet, or call the Public Health Unit on 02 4221 6700 or visit the NSW Health [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

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