**Whooping cough (pertussis) cases reported at a number of early childhood services**

The Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate has received notification of whooping cough (or pertussis) cases at three services in the north west Sydney region in the past week.

Whooping cough affects people of all ages. It can be especially serious for babies. Vaccination reduces the risk of infection.

**What is whooping cough?**

Whooping cough can be a life threatening infection in babies. Whooping cough in babies can lead to apnoea (pauses in normal breathing), pneumonia, feeding problems and weight loss, seizures, brain damage and, in some cases, death. Older children and adults can get whooping cough too and pass it on to babies.

**What are the symptoms?**

- Whooping cough usually begins like a cold with a blocked or runny nose, tiredness, mild fever and a cough.
- The cough gets worse and severe bouts of uncontrollable coughing can develop. Coughing bouts can be followed by vomiting, choking or taking a big gasping breath which causes a "whooping" sound. The cough can last for many weeks and can be worse at night.
- Some newborns may not cough at all but they can stop breathing and turn blue. Some babies have difficulties feeding and can choke or gag.
- Older children and adults may just have a cough that lasts for many weeks. They may not have the whoop.

**How is it spread?**

- Whooping cough is spread when an infectious person coughs bacteria into the air which can be inhaled by people nearby. If they are not treated early, people with whooping cough are infectious in the first three weeks of their illness.
- Whooping cough spreads easily through families, childcare centres and at school.

**Who is at risk?**

- Anyone can get whooping cough. People living in the same household as someone with whooping cough are especially at risk.
- Immunisation reduces the risk of infection but immunity fades over time. You can still get whooping cough even if you've been immunised.

**How is it prevented?**

Whooping cough vaccines provide good protection from infection but immunity fades which means that boosters are needed. Immunisation for babies • Babies need to be immunised at 2 months, 4 months and 6 months. The first dose can be given as early as 6 weeks of age.
- Getting your baby vaccinated on time gives them some protection when they are most at risk of severe illness.
- If your baby’s vaccines are overdue, see your GP now to catch up.

Immunisation for older children • A whooping cough booster is needed at 4 years of age.
- Check if your child has been vaccinated. Look at their Blue Book, speak to your GP or ring the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809.
- A second whooping cough booster is given in high school through the NSW School-based Vaccination Program.

Immunisation for adults

A booster for adults is recommended for:
- Women who are planning a pregnancy, pregnant or post delivery. These women should discuss their vaccination needs with their doctor as soon as possible.
- Other adult household members, grandparents and carers of infants under 12 months of age.
- Adults working with young children, especially health care and child care workers.
- New mothers in NSW are eligible for free whooping cough vaccine in the public maternity unit after the birth of their children.

If you are a close contact of someone with whooping cough: • If you have been exposed to someone with whooping cough early in their illness while they are infectious, watch out for symptoms and see your doctor if you get a new cough.
- Some babies and some pregnant women need antibiotics to prevent whooping cough infection if they have had significant contact with an infectious person.
How is whooping cough diagnosed?
Your doctor may ask about your symptoms and whether there you’ve had any contact with whooping cough. If your doctor thinks you have whooping cough, a swab from the back of the nose or throat can confirm the diagnosis.

How is it treated?
• Some babies may need treatment in hospital or in intensive care.
• Antibiotics are used to treat whooping cough in the early stages and can help prevent spreading whooping cough to others. People who are not treated early with the right antibiotics can spread the infection in the first 3 weeks of their illness. After 5 days of antibiotics, you are normally no longer infectious.
• The cough often continues for many weeks, despite antibiotics.

What is the public health response?
Doctors and laboratories must confidentially notify cases of pertussis to the local Public Health Unit. Public Health Unit staff can advise on the best way to stop further spread.
Infectious children are restricted from going to pre-school and school. Unimmunised contacts may be excluded from child care unless they take the special antibiotics.
For further information please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055

Yours faithfully
Paul Sheehan
R/Director, Quality Assessment and Regulation
Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate

Eastern Creek Public School Parents and Citizenship Annual General Meeting
The schedules P&C meeting AGM has been postponed until Wednesday 18th March at 6.00pm. the meeting will be held in the MPR.

Uniform Shop Notice
The Uniform Shop will be closed on Wednesday 4th March as the volunteers will be at the District Swimming Carnival

Parents/ Guardians/Carers morning Tea-Tuesday 10th March
The P&C would like to invite all parents, guardians and carers of our children to join them for morning tea on Tuesday 10th March at 9.00am outside the Community Cottage.(Uniform Shop)
Come and say hello to the members of your Parents and Citizens and ECPS Friends and Community Group, our two voluntary support organisations of the school, and hear about some of the exciting events we have planned for 2015 while enjoying a nice hot cuppa and a piece of cake.
We look forward to meeting some of the new families of the Eastern Creek community.
Michelle Mackey
P&C President

Working Bee Sunday 3rd May 2015
Please complete the attached Working Bee Information if you can help out on the day. There’s gardening, mowing, painting, jet washing and many other items to be done. Any help will be greatly appreciated. (The note is going home today with your children.)

Wes Chia
Principal