

February 03, 2026

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child, as well as school staff, may have been exposed to pertussis (whooping cough) at Galena High School. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Pertussis can produce a severe cough that can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits and/or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be very dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis, especially mothers, can spread pertussis to newborns. Symptoms developed due to this exposure are most **likely to appear on or before February 20, 2026**.

Because of your child's recent exposure to pertussis, Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) has the following recommendations:

1. If your child has a cough:
 - a. Keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports and clubs.
 - b. Make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to pertussis.
 - c. If your child has been diagnosed with pertussis by his or her doctor:
 - i. Tell the school that your child has been diagnosed with pertussis.
 - ii. School officials will request that you keep your child home from school and activities, such as sports, until your child has completed the prescribed antibiotic treatment regimen (usually for five days) OR 21 days have passed since the onset of cough.
 - iii. Ask your child's doctor for a note that states your child has pertussis.
 - iv. NNPH recommends avoiding contact with high-risk persons, such as infants (less than 12 months old), pregnant women, or immunocompromised individuals, until the full course of antibiotics is completed OR 21 days have passed since the onset of cough.
 - d. If your child's doctor says your child does NOT have pertussis: i. Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school that your child's cough is NOT pertussis and that your child can return to school and other activities at any time.
2. Even if your child is not coughing, they may be infected but have not yet developed symptoms. NNPH is requesting you ask your child's doctor for an appropriate antibiotic to prevent progression to illness. Please be sure your child takes the entire course of antibiotics as prescribed by the doctor.

Please make sure your family's vaccinations are up to date. Protection against pertussis from the childhood vaccine, DTaP, decreases over time. Older children and adults, including pregnant women, should get a pertussis booster shot called "Tdap" to protect themselves and infants near or around them. If you need the Tdap vaccine, contact your doctor, pharmacy, or NNPH Immunization Program at 775-328-2402.

If you bring your child to a doctor for pertussis, please show the reverse side of this letter to him or her. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 775-328-2447. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with stopping the spread of this illness.

Sincerely,



Nancy Diao, ScD.

Director, Population Health Division

Northern Nevada Public Health

POPULATION HEALTH DIVISION, NORTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC HEALTH

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February 03, 2026

Dear Colleague,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your patient may have been exposed to pertussis in a local school, and Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) highly recommends that you prescribe appropriate prophylactic antibiotics to your patient.

For Exposed Patients WITHOUT Symptoms:

As a precaution to protect vulnerable individuals, we are recommending antibiotic prophylaxis for this patient based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Red Book recommendations.

For Exposed Patients WITH Symptoms:

NNPH has developed the following guidelines for assessing and treating patients at this time:

For patients coughing <21 days:

1. Collect nasopharyngeal swabs or aspirate for pertussis PCR testing and/or culture.
2. Do not delay treatment with appropriate antibiotics while waiting for laboratory results if there is no alternative diagnosis.
3. Document and communicate all clinical decisions related to pertussis to the daycare or school (this includes children for whom pertussis has been ruled out).
4. Provide antibiotic prophylaxis for **all household members** if a pregnant woman, an infant less than 12 months old, or anyone with a weakened immune system lives in the household.
5. If you suspect or diagnose pertussis in your patient, please report it to the Northern Nevada Public Health Communicable Disease Program at 775-328-2447.

For patients coughing ≥21 days:

1. Testing for pertussis is not recommended. Testing after 3 weeks of cough is of limited benefit since PCR and culture are only sensitive during the first 2-3 weeks of cough when bacterial DNA is still present in the nasopharynx.
2. Treatment is no longer necessary after 21 days from cough onset, with the following exception: infants and pregnant women in their third trimester should be treated up through 6 weeks after cough onset.
3. The patient is no longer infectious and can return to daycare or school.

For all households: Administer Tdap vaccine to contacts 11 years and older who have not been previously vaccinated with Tdap or refer for vaccination at NNPH Immunization Clinic by calling 775-328-2402.

Additional clinical and laboratory guidance may be found on the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis>.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please call NNPH Communicable Disease Program at 775-328-2447. Thank you for your support and assistance to control the pertussis spread.

Sincerely,



Nancy Diao, ScD.
Director, Population Health Division
Northern Nevada Public Health