

Whooping cough

Whooping cough cases are [continuing to increase across Victoria](#), particularly among school-aged children.

[Whooping cough](#) is a very contagious infection, mostly spread through coughing or sneezing. Symptoms include:

- blocked or runny nose
- tiredness
- mild fever
- severe bouts of coughing, often followed by a ‘whooping’ sound on breathing.

Whooping cough can lead to life threatening infections in babies.

If your child is unwell, they should not attend school. Please see a doctor if you or your child develops whooping cough symptoms. Early diagnosis and treatment will help reduce the spread of the infection.

Students diagnosed with whooping cough must not attend school

If your child is diagnosed with whooping cough, they must not attend school for 21 days after the onset of the cough, or until they have received 5 days of antibiotic treatment. You must notify the school if your child is diagnosed with whooping cough.

To further reduce the spread of infection to your child and the school community, the [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019](#) require that some students who were in the same classroom as a student diagnosed with whooping cough should not attend school.

Your child should not attend school for 14 days after they were last exposed to a person diagnosed with whooping cough, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment if they are:

- aged less than 7 years; and
- not fully vaccinated with 3 doses of whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine.

This exclusion is required by law – refer to the [School exclusion table for primary schools and children’s services](#).

If your child is diagnosed with whooping cough, please contact the school to let us know.

More information

For more information about whooping cough, refer to [Whooping cough](#) on the Better Health Channel.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of whooping cough. The Department of Health recommends staying up to date with immunisations, including booster doses. A free booster dose of the pertussis vaccine is covered under the national immunisation program for students aged 12 to 13. If you are unsure about your child’s vaccination status for whooping cough, please discuss with an immunisation provider, such as your doctor.

I really appreciate your support in keeping our students safe and well.