February 21, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian & Employees:

This letter is to inform you that a confirmed case of pertussis in a Trimble Tech student has been reported to us by Tarrant County Public Health. If you are a student or a school employee you may have been exposed. Please read this information on pertussis and follow the recommendations to help stop its spread.

Pertussis, or “whooping cough”, is a highly contagious disease involving the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium that is found in the mouth, nose and throat of an infected person. Pertussis begins like a cold with runny nose, sneezing, mild fever, and cough that slowly gets worse. After one to two weeks the cough gets worse and usually starts to occur in strong coughing fits called “paroxysmal coughing.” This type of coughing may last for six or more weeks. There is generally no fever at this time, and between coughing spells the person often appears to be well. The cough is often worse at night and may be unrelieved by cough medicines. In young children coughing fits are often followed by a whooping sound as they try to catch their breath. After coughing a person may have difficulty catching his breath, may vomit, or become blue in the face or around the lips. The coughing spells may be so intense that it is hard for babies to eat, drink, or breathe. Some babies may stop breathing (called apnea) and die. Adults, teens, and vaccinated children may have milder symptoms that mimic bronchitis or asthma.

Pertussis can be a very serious disease, particularly for infants less than one year of age. It is easily spread by droplets in the air that form when a person talks, sneezes, or coughs. The following recommendations are from Tarrant County Public Health:

- Persons with any of the above described symptoms should be evaluated by a health care provider before returning to any group settings (work, school, daycare, church gatherings, etc.).
- Persons diagnosed or suspected of having pertussis are to be excluded from group settings until after completion of 5 days of antibiotic therapy.
- Review your/your child’s immunization records and catch up any that are due or past due.
- Adolescents and adults should receive Tdap vaccine to booster their immunity and prevent spread of the disease to others.
- Close contacts of a person with pertussis should receive antibiotics to prevent them from becoming ill regardless of immunization status.
- Pregnant women should make their healthcare providers aware of their exposure risk.

Sincerely,

E. Omar Ramos, Principal