Date: April 16, 2025

Notice to Parents or Guardians and staff: Gilbert Paterson Middle School, Lethbridge

Alberta Health Services has been made aware of a confirmed case of pertussis that was in attendance at **Gilbert Paterson Middle School**, while infectious. In order to prevent spread of disease to others and to protect yourself and your family, please review the following:

Background: Pertussis, also known as whooping cough or the "100-day cough," is a disease caused by bacteria that infects the lungs and airways. Pertussis causes serious coughing fits that can lead to choking or vomiting. The coughing can be so intense that a 'whooping' sound happens when an infected person tries to catch his or her breath.

Pertussis is spread easily when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Children can also be infected by rubbing their eyes or mouth after they touch toys or objects handled by a person infected with pertussis. The pertussis-causing bacteria can live for two to five days on dry objects like clothes, glass or paper.

Pertussis can also cause pneumonia, and in rare cases, seizures, brain injury and death. In Canada, one to four deaths are related to pertussis each year. These deaths are most often in infants who are too young to be immunized or children who are not fully immunized.
Pertussis can be treated with antibiotics. Sadly, even with treatment, pertussis can be deadly.

Prevention: *Public health recommends that all children's and adult's immunizations are kept up to date. Currently in Alberta vaccination for pertussis is offered at two, four, six, and 18 months and a booster at four years and 14 years. Adults are recommended to receive a dose of Pertussis vaccine (Tdap) booster every 10 years. Pregnant mothers are also encouraged to get a Tdap vaccine between 27 and 32 weeks gestation with each pregnancy, to provide protection to the baby for the first few months of life.*

Action:

> Please observe your family/child for symptoms that may include a mild fever, runny nose, red watery eyes and a cough, followed by more serious coughing fits that can last for weeks or months. The coughing fits may cause difficulty breathing, choking and vomiting.

If you, your child, or a family member develops the above symptoms and you decide to see a nurse or physician, please call the office first to advise of possible pertussis and take this letter with you.

Testing for pertussis is done by collection of a nasal swab that detects the bordetella pertussis bacteria.

If you or your child does not have any of the symptoms mentioned above, there is no need to see a nurse or physician for diagnosis.

If you have any questions, please call Health Link Alberta at **811.** For general pertussis information Albertans can text 'Whooping Cough' to **88111** to receive free information on whooping cough symptoms, treatment and how to prevent it from spreading**.**

Thank you for your attention to this important health issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maria Todor
Medical Officer of Health, South Zone
Alberta Health Services

SOUTH ZONE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICES
COMMUNITY HEALTH SITES

SITE	PHONE/FAX
Blairmore/Crowsnest Pass Community Health 12501 – 20th Avenue Blairmore, AB T0K 0E0	Ph: 403-562-5030 Fax: 403-562-7379
Bow Island Community Health Provincial Building 802 6 Street E Bow Island, AB T0K 0G0	Ph: 403-545-2296 Fax: 403-545-6357
Brooks Community Health (hospital) 440 3rd Street E Brooks, AB T1R 0X8	Ph: 403-501-3330 Fax: 403-501-3323
Cardston Community Health Provincial Building 576 Main Street Cardston, AB T0K OKO	Ph: 403-653-5230 Fax: 403-653-2926
Coaldale Community Health (hospital) 2100 11th Street Coaldale, AB T1M 1L2	Ph.: 403-345-3000 Fax: 403-345-2043
Fort Macleod Community Health (hospital) 744 – 26th Street Fort Macleod, AB T0L OZO	Ph.: 403-553-5351 Fax: 403-553-2333
Lethbridge Community Health/Melcor Centre Suite #110, 200 4th Avenue South Lethbridge, AB T1J 4C9	Ph. Main: 403-388-6666 Fax Main: 403-328-5934

Magrath Community Health 37 E 2 Ave N Magrath, AB T0K 1J0	Ph.: 403-758-4422 Fax: 403-758-3332
Medicine Hat Community Health 2948 Dunmore Rd SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8E3	Ph: 403-502-8200 Fax: 403-528-2250
Milk River Community Health (hospital) 517 Centre Ave Milk River, AB T0K 1M0	Ph: 403-647-3430 Toll Free:1-866-642-3430 Fax: 403-647-3435
Oyen Community Health 312 3rd Ave E Oyen, AB T0J 2J0	Ph: 403-664-3651 Fax: 403-664-2934
Picture Butte Community Health 301 Cowan Ave Picture Butte, AB T0K 1V0	Ph: 403-388-6751 Fax: 403-732-5062
Pincher Creek Community Health (hospital) 1222 Bev McLauchlin Dr Pincher Creek AB T0K 1W0	Ph: 403-627-1230 Fax: 403-627-5275
Raymond Community Health (hospital) 150 N 4th St E Raymond, AB T0K 2S0	Ph.: 403-752-5430 Fax: 403-752-4655
Taber Community Health (hospital) 4326 50th Ave Taber, AB T1G 1N9	Ph.: 403-223-7230 Fax: 403-223-8733
Vauxhall Community Health 406 – 1st Ave. N. Vauxhall, AB T0K 2K0	Ph: 403-223-7229 Fax: 403-654-2134

Revised February 2023