11<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Dear Parent and Staff member

**Pertussis (whooping cough)**
A confirmed case of pertussis (whooping cough) is being investigated in a child from Batlow Technology School. I am writing to provide advice and to ask that you watch out for the symptoms of pertussis, especially over the next few weeks.

**What is pertussis?**
Pertussis is an infection of the throat that can cause bouts of coughing, and sometimes breathing difficulties and vomiting. It can be a very serious infection in small children. The illness can last for many weeks. It usually starts with a snuffle or a cold.

**What should people sick with pertussis do?**
If your child has symptoms, or develops symptoms take this letter and see your local doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor can advise whether pertussis is likely and arrange for early treatment if needed. Treating people who have pertussis with antibiotics can stop the infection spreading, but is more effective if started early.

To help prevent this infection spreading, people who have been diagnosed with pertussis should not attend Batlow Technology School until they have completed the first 5 days of a course of the recommended antibiotics. If antibiotics cannot be taken, then they must stay away for 3 weeks after onset of the cough.

**How is it prevented?**
Vaccination is the most important way of reducing pertussis in our community. It is important to double check that your child is fully up to date with his or her immunisations against pertussis. If in doubt, please ask your doctor to check.

Immunity to whooping cough from immunisation or infection is not life lasting. It is therefore important to seek medical attention if your child develops a cough even if fully immunised.

If symptoms develop please take this letter and see your doctor ASAP. A course of antibiotics may be required prior to returning to school. A pathology test may also be requested. (Nasopharyngeal or throat swab is the preferred specimen)

**Need more information?**
For more information, please see the attached Pertussis Fact sheet, or call the Infectious Disease Surveillance officer at the Public Health Unit on 02 6080 8900