Dear Parent or Guardian:

Two students at Cummings High School have been diagnosed with pertussis (whooping cough). These two students were not known to have any close contact to each other, i.e. we believe infections in these two students to be unrelated. The Alamance County Health Department is working with your child’s school to identify students who may have been exposed to either of these students. *If your child is identified as having close contact to this student, you will be notified with a separate letter.*

Hundreds of cases of pertussis are reported each year in North Carolina. Pertussis is an infection that affects the airways and is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing. It causes a severe cough that can last for weeks or months, sometimes leading to coughing fits or vomiting. Anyone can get pertussis, but it can be dangerous for infants and people with weakened immune systems. Family members with pertussis can spread it to newborns. Additional information about pertussis is provided on the CDC website ([http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/](http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/)).

The best protection against pertussis is vaccination. 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 or call the Alamance County Health Department to find a vaccine provider near you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Alamance County Health Department at 336-516-7715 or Mary Brady at 336-570-6100.