

Whooping Cough confirmed at Hanover school, parents told to be alert for symptoms

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By Brent Solomon

HANOVER, VA (WWBT) -

The Hanover school district is prompting parents to be on the lookout for common cold symptoms, which could turn out to be a much bigger problem. It follows a confirmed case of Whooping Cough at Stonewall Jackson Middle School.

The news spread just as quickly as school leaders could share it. "I heard about that....I saw it on Facebook," says Brittany Brotherton, who has serious concerns about someone at Stonewall Jackson Middle coming down with Whooping Cough. "Why are they in school? Why aren't they vaccinated? I thought everybody had to be vaccinated," Brotherton says.

The school sent home a letter to parents about the highly contagious disease.

"If you catch it early, there are antibiotics that we use to treat it but the earlier you can catch it and treat, the better off you will be," says Dr. Elizabeth Bigelow of Patient First. She says the symptoms start small. "An adult can just have a common cold, or think they have a common cold with symptoms of a running nose, low fever, and sort of a mild cough at that time and they can spread Pertussis (Whooping Cough) to somebody else at that time," she says. Anyone within close contact with someone who has it should see a doctor right away. That contact can be living with someone or even attending class with someone who is ill.

"In the second phase of the disease, you get the paroxysms where they go into coughing fits," Bigelow says. "It kind of sounds like a whoop and then they go into these severe coughing fits where they cough so hard, they can even break ribs.

The severe cough can last for weeks, even months, making it hard for a sick person to breathe and may even lead to complications like Pneumonia.

The school district says there hasn't been any other cases of Whooping Cough besides the one that's been confirmed.

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