

Numerous outbreaks of pertussis (whooping cough) have occurred recently among school children in Illinois. Pertussis is easily transmitted through coughing and sneezing and may cause an illness that persists for weeks to months. Pertussis does not typically cause severe illness in healthy students, but can cause prolonged absences from school and extracurricular activities. In addition, pertussis can be transmitted from healthy students to infants and individuals with chronic illnesses, for whom pertussis can be life-threatening. Protection against pertussis begins to wear off during grade school. This leaves pre-teens, teenagers and adults at risk for this illness.

This fall, students entering sixth and ninth grades will be required to provide proof of Tdap vaccination along with the school physical forms that are also required for these grades.