

School may ban unvaccinated students

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A Cook County, Ill., Public Health Department official says the county may ban students not vaccinated for whooping cough from public schools.

Catherine Counard, the county's assistant medical director for communicable disease, said New Trier Township High School, which has been the site of a recent outbreak of whooping cough, has not canceled all extracurricular activities, despite recommendations from the health department, the Chicago Tribune reported Thursday.

Counard said students who have not been vaccinated may be barred from attending school if the outbreak continues to grow.

Some 29 students and one faculty member had been diagnosed with the disease, also known as pertussis, as of Wednesday, and a recent school survey found only 30 percent of the student body had been vaccinated against the contagious disease.

"By law, we have the authority to close the school to anyone who is not vaccinated," Counard said. "If we have to, we can get a court order for that. We're hoping it's not coming to that."

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