

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024

### **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have received a number of calls regarding children with symptoms of Hand, Foot and Mouth. We have contacted Public Health who have given the following advice for us to share with parents.

Please find below some further information to best support your child:

#### **Hand, foot and mouth disease**

Hand, foot and mouth disease is a common viral illness in childhood. It is generally a mild illness caused by an enterovirus. In rare instances it can be more severe.

The child/person may develop a fever, have reduced appetite and generally feel unwell. One or 2 days later a rash may develop with blisters, on hands, feet, insides of their cheeks, gums and on the sides of the tongue.

Not all cases have symptoms. The incubation period is 3 to 5 days. Persons affected are most infectious during the first week of the illness.

The illness is usually mild and clears up by itself in 7 to 10 days. If the individual develops the rare additional symptoms of high fever, headache, stiff neck, back pain, or other complications, then they should seek prompt medical advice.

Spread of the viral disease is caused by direct contact with the fluids produced by the body (such as saliva, mucus etc.) of the infected person or by aerosol spread such as coughing and sneezing. Younger children are more at risk because they tend to play closely with their peers.

For expectant females, although there is usually no risk to the pregnancy or baby, it is best to avoid close contact with anyone who has hand, foot and mouth disease. This is because having a high temperature during the first 3 months of pregnancy can very rarely lead to miscarriage, and getting hand, foot and mouth disease shortly before giving birth can mean your baby is born with a mild version of it. Pregnant women who have been in contact with an affected individual may wish to speak to their GP or midwife.

Do not confuse this disease with foot and mouth disease which is found in animals. Note that symptoms may present differently dependent on the skin tone. This guidance is not intended to act as a diagnostic tool. If concerned, refer to a clinician and follow appropriate and proportionate measures in the meantime.

Visit the NHS website for additional information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hand-foot-mouth-disease/>

If you need any further information or advice, please contact your GP.

We have taken precautions in nursery to limit the spread as best we can. For example, emptied the sand pit, discarded playdough, removed water play. We will take a heightened approach to cleaning surfaces and also resources that are more likely to be mouthed by children. We have also ensured a more regular handwashing regime with the children.

Yours sincerely,

*Samantha Richards*

Executive Head Teacher

