



Merry Poppets Nursery

Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Exclusion Policy for Merry Poppets Nursery

Date the policy becomes effective 14th February 2025

Rationale

We strive to ensure that the nursery is a healthy and hygienic environment for all who use it, children, staff and parents. When your child is well the setting's sickness policy helps to ensure their continued good health and prevents staff contracting the illness and being absent due to sickness. Hand foot and mouth is extremely infectious. It affects adults and children.

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the steps for managing Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) within our early years setting. HFMD is a contagious viral infection common in children under 5 years, although it can also affect adults. It is characterised by a fever, sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands, feet and sometimes other areas.

2. Signs and symptoms

Children and staff may show symptoms including:

- Fever or cold like symptoms
- Painful sores in the mouth and sore throat
- Skin rash that can begin as a non-itchy red rash that develops on the hands and feet; sometimes the rash can develop into painful blisters.
- Painful mouth ulcers
- General malaise, irritability or loss of appetite

Not all cases have symptoms. The incubation period is 3-5 days, persons affected are most infectious during the first week of the illness. The illness is usually mild and clears up by it's self, If the child or staff member develops the rare additional symptoms of a high fever, headache, stiff neck, back pain, or other complications then they should seek prompt medical advice.

3. Spread

Spread is by direct contact with the secretions 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. There is a slight risk to pregnant staff, and they may wish to avoid close contact with an affected child. Women who develop any rash symptoms during pregnancy should seek advice from their general practitioner or midwife.

4. Exclusion Criteria

To prevent the spread of HFMD and protect the health of all children and staff within the Nursery the following exclusions will apply following a diagnosis of



HFMD.

Child Exclusion:

- A child diagnosed with Hand Foot and Mouth **MUST** be excluded from the setting for **at least 5 days.**
- The exclusion period begins from when there is a confirmed diagnosis of hand foot and mouth or the onset of symptoms.
- After abstaining from nursery for 5 days children may return to the setting once their fever has subsided, mouth sores are no longer open, and they are generally feeling well enough to return to nursery.

5. Hygiene and Prevention Measures

Hand foot and mouth can be a recurring infection, and it is possible to get hand foot and mouth more than once. To reduce the spread of HFMD, all staff and children should follow these hygiene practices:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after using the toilet, before eating, and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Encourage children to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing.
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces and toys that may have come into contact with saliva or nasal secretions.
- Managers will enforce their systems of control throughout the setting, which involves enhanced cleaning schedules for all areas of the nursery affected with HFMD.
- Ensure that children do not share cups, utensils, or towels.
- Promote good hand washing in both those affected and the staff who carry out nappy changing and/or assist with toileting to reduce the risk of transmission. This should continue even after the child is well because the virus can still be present in the faeces and saliva for a few weeks.

6. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Parents or Guardians must notify the setting if their child has been diagnosed with HFMD. The setting will inform other parents/guardians if the setting has a confirmed case of HFMD via parentszone and a notice will be displayed on entry to the setting.

7. Return to the setting

A child may only return to the setting after the 5th day from exclusion period and when:-

- The fever has been absent for at least 24 hours.
- Mouth sores are not open or leaking fluids such as excessive saliva (due to the mouth ulcers).
- They are feeling well enough to engage in daily activities.



- The child is no longer contagious (typically after the fever subsides and blisters have healed).

8. Conclusion

Children should be excluded from Merry Poppets nursery for at least 5 days or until the rash has gone and they are back to full health and well enough to attend nursery, without requiring one to one attention. This exclusion policy helps ensure the health and safety of all children, staff and families within our early years setting. Adhering to these measures will reduce the risk of HFMD spreading and ensure a safe environment for everyone.