Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease Policy Abbeymead Under 5’s Playgroup

This policy outlines the procedures and requirements for managing and preventing the spread of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) in our early years setting. HFMD is a contagious viral illness that typically affects young children and can lead to outbreaks within group care settings. The goal of this policy is to safeguard the health and well-being of all children, staff, and visitors by limiting the risk of transmission.

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children attending our setting. In the event of a child showing symptoms of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease, the following guidelines must be followed to ensure the child is fit to return to the setting and that the illness does not spread to others.

Symptoms of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:

HFMD typically presents with:

- Fever

- Painful sores in the mouth

- A rash, often with red spots, on the hands, feet, and sometimes the buttocks and legs

- Irritability and loss of appetite (especially in younger children)

Exclusion from the Setting:

Children who have Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease must stay at home for a minimum of **3 days** from the onset of symptoms to allow the illness to run its course and prevent the spread to others. During this time, parents or carers should ensure their child is well-rested and receive appropriate medical care as needed.

Conditions for Returning to the Setting:

Before returning to the setting, children must meet the following criteria:

1. Minimum 3-Day Absence: The child must be absent from the setting for at least 3 days after the onset of symptoms to ensure the illness is no longer contagious.

2. Temperature-Free for 24 Hours: The child must be free **from fever for a full 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g., paracetamol, ibuprofen) before returning to the setting.

3. No Medication Required: The child should not be taking any medication (such as Calpol or ibuprofen) to reduce fever or pain in the 24-hour period prior to returning to the setting.

4. Spots Must Be Scabbed: Any spots or rashes that have appeared as part of the infection must **be scabbed over, and no fresh spots** should be visible. This ensures that the child is no longer shedding the virus.

Hygiene and Preventative Measures:

- Parents and staff should promote frequent handwashing and good hygiene practices to reduce the risk of infection spread.

- Children and staff should avoid close contact (such as kissing, hugging, or sharing utensils) with any child showing symptoms of HFMD.

- The setting will increase cleaning protocols, especially in areas where children have had direct contact (e.g., toys, changing areas, and surfaces).

Monitoring and Reporting:

- If a child develops symptoms of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease while at the setting, parents will be contacted immediately, and the child will be asked to go home as soon as possible.

- Parents or carers must notify the setting if their child is diagnosed with HFMD, so that we can monitor for any further cases and take appropriate action.

This policy is designed to ensure the health and safety of all children, staff, and families within our early years setting. We appreciate the cooperation of parents and carers in adhering to these guidelines to help prevent the spread of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease and maintain a healthy environment for everyone.

Signed: Natalie Maskill

Setting Name : Abbeymead Under 5’s Playgroup

Date: 11/09/2023