

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**

There has been an unexpected increase in children affected by hand, foot and mouth disease (HFM) in Year 2 at Barrow Hedges Primary School. HFM is a common viral illness in childhood. It is generally a mild illness caused by an enterovirus. The illness is usually mild and clears up by itself in 7 to 10 days. Spread is by direct contact with the secretions of the infected person (including faeces) or by aerosol spread such as coughing and sneezing. It is important to wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet, handling/changing nappies, coughing and sneezing as this may contaminate the hands with the virus and be passed on to other people.

Children should be kept away from school or nursery if they are unwell. Children are safe to return to school or nursery as soon as they are feeling better. **There is no need to keep your child off school if they are well and you do not need to wait for all the blisters to have healed.** Keeping your child off for longer periods is unlikely to stop the illness spreading because the virus can still be present in the secretions/faeces for several weeks.

Do speak to your GP if:

- your symptoms or your child's symptoms do not improve after 7 to 10 days
- you or your child has a very high temperature, or feels hot and shivery
- you're worried about your child's symptoms
- your child is dehydrated – they're not peeing as often as usual
- you're pregnant and get hand, foot and mouth disease

Check with your GP surgery before going. They may suggest a phone consultation.

If you have any questions, please discuss with your GP/healthcare provider. More information can also be found on the NHS website at:

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

Yours sincerely,  
Sarah Robinson



**Sarah Robinson**

South London Health Protection Team

UK Health Security Agency Tel. on call: 0300 303 0450

[www.gov.uk/ukhsa](http://www.gov.uk/ukhsa)