IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Hand, foot and mouth disease

8th November, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

It has come to my attention that some students in the school may have Hand, foot and mouth disease which is usually a mild illness. It is **not** related to the disease of a similar name that affects cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and other ‘cloven-hooved’ animals.

**What is Hand, foot and mouth disease?**
Hand, foot and mouth disease is caused by a virus (usually Coxsackie virusA16), it causes blisters on the hands, feet and in the mouth. It mostly occurs in warmer weather, and tends to spread easily where a lot of young children play together, such as in child care centres and schools.

**Signs and symptoms?**
A child who has the infection may have a fever, be unwilling to eat or drink because of ulcers in the mouth, may have a runny nose, sore throat and lack energy. Blisters on the hands, feet and ulcers or blisters in the mouth appear 1-2 days after the first symptoms and may last for 2-7 days.

**How long is it infectious?**
The child with the disease is infectious until the blisters dry up. Children with Hand, foot and mouth disease should **not attend school until all the blisters have dried up**.

**What parents/guardians/carers can do?**
- There is no treatment which will make Hand, foot and mouth disease go away more quickly
- Give paracetamol for fever if needed
- Offer plenty of drinks; avoid acidic drinks similar to orange juice
- See your doctor if your child is unwell, has a bad headache that persists, or a high fever
- All blisters to dry naturally

Moonee Ponds West Primary School is aware that Hand, foot and mouth disease can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Kind regards

Emma & Jess
Classroom Teacher