



20 July 2023

Dear Families,

It has come to my attention that a student on the Senior Campus has contracted hand, foot, and mouth disease. This letter is to advise you to please monitor your child for symptoms.

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is caused by a virus (usually from the coxsackie group of enteroviruses, particularly coxsackie virus A16). It causes blisters on the hands and feet, in the mouth and often in the 'nappy' area of young children. It is generally a mild disease that lasts 7 to 10 days. There is no connection between this disease and the foot and mouth disease that affects cattle and some other animals.

This infection is spread by direct contact with fluid from the skin blisters, nose and throat discharges (including saliva, sputum or nasal mucus), droplets (sneezing, coughing) and faeces (poo). Good personal hygiene is important to prevent spread of the infection to others. The skin blisters of HFMD are infectious until they become crusty and there is no fluid in the blisters. The virus may also be shed in the faeces for several weeks after the blisters resolve.

What can you do?

I seek your cooperation in monitoring your child for any symptoms. In the instance where HFMD is detected please visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au and search for "hand, foot and mouth disease" for advice and further information.

If your child develops HFMD you need to inform:

- the school and advise when the symptoms started. Penola Catholic College is aware that HFMD can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.
- parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

If my child has HFMD when can they return to school?

Health regulations requires that where a student has HFMD they should not attend school until all of the blisters have dried.

Kind regards

Ms Erin Bonavia
Deputy Principal
Senior Campus