



Headlice Policy

PURPOSE

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.

SCOPE

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

POLICY

Parent/Guardian Consent

A pro forma consent form:

- obtains parent/guardian consent to head lice inspections
- should be provided to parents for completion as part of enrolment
- applies for the duration the child is at the school.
- must be updated when:
 - guardianship or custody arrangements change for the student
 - parents/guardians no longer wish to consent to inspections

Visual Headlice Checks

Head lice have been found in most schools. Checks for head lice occur via:

- visual checks without physical contact:
 - do not require parent/guardian consent
 - are made by people authorised by the principal, e.g. classroom teachers.
- head lice inspections involving the examination of a student:
 - require written parental consent, usually obtained at enrolment
 - are made by people authorised by the principal and school council e.g. school nurse or parent volunteer.

Exclusion of Students

Students identified with live head lice should be:

- provided with a note to take home to inform the parent/carer that their child may have head lice at the conclusion of the school day.
- excluded from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table.

Note 1: Principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school.

Note 2: The presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion. There is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate for the child to return to school.

Detection and Treatment Responsibilities

Responsibilities for managing head lice are shared between: parents/guardians, schools and principals.

Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for detection and treatment of head lice.

Parents/guardians should:

- regularly, preferably once a week, check for lice or eggs in the hair of:
 - their child
 - all household members
- notify the school:
 - if their child is affected
 - when treatment commenced
- not send their children to school with untreated head lice.

Schools must:

- exercise sensitivity towards students and families with head lice
- maintain student confidentiality to avoid stigmatisation
- support and provide practical treatment advice to parents/guardians.

Principals must:

- alert parents/guardians of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child/children
- use discretion about informing the school community about an infestation.

Note: The Department of Human Services indicates at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

Anyone can catch head lice.

- Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- As per the Uniform Policy, neat and presentable hair is expected, neither boys or girls may have extremes of hair in fashion, length, style or colour, shoulder length and longer hair should always be worn up or cut.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information, by offering a screening process, and by alerting parents of lice when detected.
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be screened by trained personnel for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be checked (see Headlice Inspections – Consent Form below).
- All children screened will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the screening (see Headlice Check Report Sheet below), as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the Principal (or delegate) will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live eggs and/or live lice are informed as soon as is practicable so that appropriate treatment can commence. The Principal or delegate will also provide parents of children found to have live lice and/ or live eggs with information about head lice treatment and prevention and where to purchase it.
- The Principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy outbreaks.

HEAD LICE INSPECTIONS – CONSENT FORM

Throughout the year, the school will be arranging head lice inspections of students. The management of head lice works best when all children are involved in our screening program.

The school is aware that this can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining student confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation.

Before any inspections are conducted staff will explain to all students what is being done and why, and it will be emphasised to students that the presence of head lice in their hair does not mean that their hair is less clean or well-kept than anyone else's. It will also be pointed out that head lice can be itchy and annoying and if you know you have got them, you can do something about it.

Trained staff will conduct the inspection of students and will complete a Headlice Check Report sheet.

The person conducting the inspections will physically search through each student's hair to see if any lice or eggs are present. Moslem girls will only be inspected in the presence of women.

In cases where live head lice/eggs are found, the person inspecting the student will inform the student's class teacher and the principal. The school will contact parents to collect the child so that treatment can commence. Comprehensive advice about the use of safe treatment practices which do not place children's health at risk, will be provided.

Please note that the law requires that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until appropriate treatment has commenced. The school requires the return of the Headlice Treatment Reply slip, when the child returns to school.

Parent's/Guardian's Full Name:

Address: Postcode:

Name(s) of Child/Children attending the school:

Year Level:

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I hereby give my consent for the above-named children to participate in the school's head lice inspection program for the remainder of this year.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date:

HEAD LICE CHECK REPORT SHEET

Your child was checked today by trained staff at school for the presence of head lice.

The results of the check are:

- No lice or eggs detected
- Dead eggs were found
- Live eggs were found
- Live lice were found

Therefore, the following action is required:

- No action required.
- Child's hair must be treated with a method that kills or removes live lice before the child is returned to school.

Regards

Lynne Brenner

Principal

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HEAD LICE TREATMENT REPLY SLIP

If your child has been detected with live lice and/or live eggs, this reply slip must be returned to school when your child returns to school after treatment.

- I have treated my child's head in a manner that has killed or removed the live lice.
- I would like to be shown how the Dept of Human Services recommends removal of eggs and lice using hair conditioner and a fine-toothed comb.

Child's Name: Child's Class:

Parent Signature: