



Head lice policy

Rationale

Schools have an important role to play in the education, control and prevention of head lice. The Department of Health and Human Services indicates at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools.

Anyone can catch head lice and it can spread from person to person by head to head contact. Head lice do not fly, hop or jump.

Pediculosis or 'head lice' are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They cannot transmit any infectious diseases. Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person, where head lice crawl from head to head.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure reports of head lice are responded to quickly and effectively
- ensure effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed
- ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their treatment

Implementation

Parent/carer detection and treatment responsibilities

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the detection and the treatment of head lice, which includes:

- not sending their child to school with untreated head lice
- using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk
- regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members
- notifying the school:
 - if their child is affected
 - when treatment has commenced

Control of head lice in schools

Headlice can spread via the sharing of headwear such as hats, hairbrushes, headbands etc therefore the school will not provide 'share hats' if a student is without one during the mandatory times hats are to be worn.

Students with long hair should wear it tied back while at school. Tying back long hair helps to stop the spread of head lice.

When a student is identified with live head lice the school will:

- provide the student with a note to take home to inform their parent/carer that their child may have head lice. The student can return to school once treatment has commenced

- exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing regulations 2009, School Exclusion Table.

Upon their return to school, parents/carers of excluded children must inform the school that appropriate treatment has commenced

Principals must:

- alert parents/carers of other students in the same class as the affected child/children, of an infestation
- use discretion to avoid identifying the student with the infestation

Note:

- The Principal has overall responsibility to exclude a student from the school
- The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion (only live head lice)
- There is no requirement for a doctor or local council to issue a clearance certificate for a child to return to school

- An agreement is included on the student enrolment form, that Parents will collect their child if they are suspected of having head lice.
- Staff are authorised to undertake visual checks of students heads only (observations without touching of students heads of hair)
- The Principal will provide all teachers and aides with information about head lice
- 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 infestations

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's School Review

Ratified by School Council August 2019

To be reviewed by School Council August 2022