



# Head Lice

## POLICY

### Rationale

Most schools will have students with head lice at any given time. Whilst parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the school also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents/carers and students.

### Head lice

Head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on human hair. They will be found on the hair itself and move to the scalp to feed. They have six legs which end in a claw and they rarely fall from the head. Louse eggs (also called nits) are very small (the size of a pin head) and are laid within 1.5cm of the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair. If isolated from the head, head lice die very quickly (usually within 24 hours).

### Aim

- To educate and advise parents/carers regarding the control, detection and treatment of head lice.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students and their parents/carers.

### Implementation

- While it is parents/carers 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 on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/carers and staff at the beginning of every year and more frequently if required.
- Parents/carers need to ensure that their children do not attend school with untreated head lice.
- The principal will nominate specific staff members who will be able to carry out head lice inspections (physical examinations) of a student's head and hair for the presence of head lice.
- The school will obtain written permission from parents/carers for all physical inspections by a nominated staff member for the presence of head lice. Only students whose parents have consented will be physically inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- All students who have had a physical head lice inspection will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the inspection.
- Consistent with *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001*, the principal will ensure that the parents/carers of any student found to have live lice are informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced.
- The presence of louse eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion from school.
- The principal will provide parents of students found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.

- Parents/carers need to be aware that one treatment is usually not sufficient to manage the problem. Insecticide resistance is common and a treatment again in seven days is usually required.
- To control the incidence of head lice, it is recommended that parents/carers:
  - \* Regularly inspect (preferably once a week) their child/s hair for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the most effective method);
  - \* Regular inspection of all household members, followed by treatment, if head lice are detected; and
  - \* Upon detection of head lice, notify the school and advise when treatment has commenced.

### **References**

- School Policy Advisory Guide  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/headlice.aspx>

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as deemed necessary.

### **Ratified**

As this is an operational policy it is not required to be ratified by School Council.