

## HEAD LICE POLICY

### **Rationale:**

- 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.

### **Aims:**

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

### **Implementation:**

- 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.
- 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 principal will ensure all teachers and aides are provided with professional development regarding head lice, who will then be authorised to carry out visual checks of students heads for head lice (observations without touching of the students head or hair). The principal will also identify specific staff members to carry out head lice inspections (physical examinations) of students head and hair for the presence of head lice.
- Children whose parents have agreed on the enrolment form to have their child's head checked will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- Parents will be notified by telephone of children checked or inspected and are found with live lice. The class and the adjoining class will receive a letter advising of head lice detected in the class. (see letter)
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the principal will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that their child is to be excluded from school until appropriate treatment has commenced. Such children will not be sent home during the school day, but will be dismissed as usual. Lice eggs are not grounds for exclusion.
- The principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice is available at the school.

### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last reviewed in June 2021.



(Class Letter)

96 Kearney Drive,  
Aspendale Gardens, 3195  
Phone: 9587 0877  
Principal – Cheryle Osborne

Date:

Dear Parent,

A case of head lice has been reported in \_\_\_\_\_ Head lice infestation is a problem that affects most schools at some time or another because it is so highly contagious. **We recommend that students with long hair have it tied back and plaited at all times.**

Treating head lice can become a time-consuming and costly task. It is much simpler if the condition is discovered in the early stages.

To eradicate lice, products are available from pharmacies without prescription. Head lice are only pin-head size and are very difficult to see. Their presence causes an itchy scalp.

Eggs (nits) are not always eradicated by treatment and need to be removed. They are white, cling to the hair near the scalp and are more easily seen. The most effective method is with the fingernails. If they are not removed effectively reinfestation will occur in 7-10 days. **PLEASE NOTE: No treatment kills all of the eggs so treatment must involve two applications seven days apart.**

We seek your cooperation in the examination and possible treatment of your child's hair.

In classes where lice infestation is an ongoing concern, the school may request that parents take their child to be checked by an officer from the Kingston Council.

Children with head lice are required under the Health (infectious diseases) Regulations to be excluded from school, day care or crèche until treatment has commenced. They may return the following day after treatment has commenced and all eggs and lice have been removed. Please read attached information sheet for further information.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated by all.

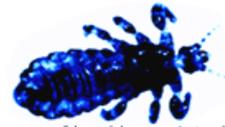
Thanking you, in anticipation,

**Cheryle Osborne**  
**Principal**

→ **PTO**

## ABOUT HEAD LICE

Head lice have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice and given the chance head lice move from head to head without discrimination.



Enlarged image of head louse. Actual size 2-4mm

- Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects.
- Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown.
- People get head lice from direct hair to hair contact with another person who has head lice.
- Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

## FINDING HEAD LICE

Lice can crawl and hide. The easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps:

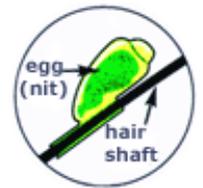
**Step 1** Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.

**Step 2** Now comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth, head lice comb.

**Step 3** Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

**Step 4** Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

**Step 5** Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4 or 5 times

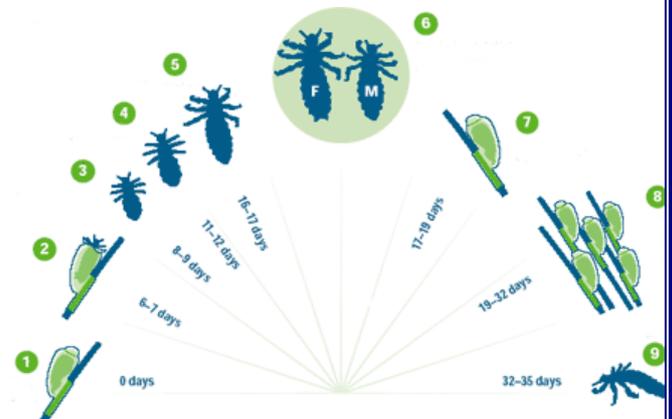


If lice or eggs are found, the child's hair must be treated.

Head lice eggs are small (the size of a pinhead) and oval. A live egg will 'pop' when squashed between fingernails.

## THE LIFE CYCLE OF HEAD LICE

1. Egg is laid on hair shaft. Egg is called a 'nit'.
2. Louse emerges after 6-7 days.
3. First moult 2 days after hatching.
4. Second moult 5 days after hatching.
5. Third moult 10 days after hatching.
6. Emerging from their third moult as adult lice, the female and slightly similar male begin to reproduce.
7. Female lays first egg 1 or 2 days after mating.
8. Female can lay approximately 3 to 8 eggs per day for the next 16 days.
9. Having lived 32 to 35 days the louse dies.



## TREATING HEAD LICE

- Concentrate on the head - there is no evidence to suggest that you need to clean the house or classroom.
- **No treatment kills all of the eggs so treatment must involve two applications seven days apart.**
- If you are using lotions, apply the product to dry hair.
- There is no need to treat the whole family, unless they also have head lice.
- Only the pillowcase requires specific laundering; either wash it in hot water (at least 60 degrees centigrade) or dry it using a clothes dryer on the hot or warm setting.
- There is no product available that prevents head lice. Using the conditioner and comb method once a week will help you detect any head lice early and minimise the problem. Tying back and plaiting long hair can help prevent the spread of head lice.
- Combs with long, rounded stainless steel teeth positioned very close together have been shown to be the most effective, however, any head lice comb can be us