

POLICY: Head Lice Policy

PROGRAM LEADER: Michelle Smith / Elaine Brady

DATE RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: December 2017

RATIONALE

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. 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 itching and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands. They can cause embarrassment and social isolation for children so they need to be controlled. While recognising that parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the School also has a role in the management of head lice infection and in providing support for parents/guardians and students.

AIMS

1. To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
2. To ensure effective processes for treating head lice are in place, well known and consistently followed.
3. To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice occurrences and treatment options.

IMPLEMENTATION

- 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, providing a screening process, and alerting parents when head lice are detected.
- All teachers, Education Support staff and first aid coordinators will be provided with up to date information regarding head lice policies and procedures.
- Teachers, Education Support staff and first aid coordinators are authorised to carry out visual checks of students' heads for lice. The principal may authorise other trained staff, trained professionals or volunteers to carry out more thorough head lice inspections (physical examinations).
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form upon enrolment allowing their children to be inspected for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have signed the permission form will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- Parents of children inspected may be provided with a confidential report and/or a phone call to advise the results of the inspection. The school will also aim to provide advice on the latest information regarding head lice treatments.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the principal may exclude children with head lice from school until appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Upon their return to school excluded children may be required to undergo a head lice inspection by an authorised person.
- Information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice will appear throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy infestations.
- The school will encourage children to learn about head lice to help remove any stigma associated with the issue through the school's Health Education Program.
- The school will provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Reviews of the school's head lice policy will be conducted with reference to the *Department of Human Services*' website (www.health.vic.gov.au), and seek endorsement from the School Council for any changes.

EVALUATION

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

APPENDICES

- Nil

REFERENCES

- DEECD - School Policy and Advisory Guide:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/azindex.aspx>

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/\\$FILE/06-024a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/575C47EA02890DA4CA25717000217213/$FILE/06-024a.pdf)
- Department of Human Services
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/disease-information-advice/head-lice>