

HEAD LICE POLICY

RESPONSIBILITIES



The parent's responsibility is to:

- read the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet;
- treat their child's hair immediately if their child has head lice;
- inform the school if their child has head lice;
- comply with the school's head lice policy, and
- regularly check their child's hair for head lice.

The Community (School) Nurse's role is to:

- provide information, advice and education to parents and the school community about head lice management.

The school's role is to:

- develop, implement and maintain a head lice management policy, and
- provide a copy of the Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet at enrolment and on request.

The Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet will be:

- included in the enrolment package;
- displayed on notice boards;
- sent home to parents of a child with head lice, and
- promoted regularly in the school newsletter.

Other head lice education strategies:

- Head lice information will be included in class activities where appropriate, e.g. personal development (how to identify head lice and comb out), Science (life cycle of the head louse) and drama (short humorous play).
- Head lice management education sessions will be provided on request by the Community (School) Nurse for staff, parents and P&C members, to ensure the school community is well-informed.

Parents who need further advice or who experience difficulty with treatment may be referred to the Community (School) Nurse for assistance.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN A CHILD IS FOUND TO HAVE HEAD LICE

Day 1:

- The student will be given a brief age-appropriate explanation about the head lice.
- Parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child. A 'Letter to Parents' will be sent home with the student along with a copy of the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- Parents of the other students in the class will be sent a letter on the same day asking them to check their child's hair for head lice.

Day 2:

- The day after treatment has commenced, the parent should send the child back to school with the completed 'Confirmation of Treatment' tear-off section of the *Letter to Parents*.
- If the tear-off section is not returned and the student is not able to confirm that treatment has commenced, the Principal or delegate will contact the parent.
- If no treatment has started, the parents will be asked if they are experiencing any difficulty.
- Parents will be given a reminder regarding their responsibility to the child and the school community.

Day 3:

- Where a child again returns to school without treatment commenced, the Principal or delegate may ask the Community (School) Nurse, who represents the Department of Health in the school, to undertake phone contact.

Day 4:

- Where a student yet again returns to school without evidence of treatment, the Principal or delegate will contact the parent and advise that the student is excluded from school until treatment has commenced.
- Homework will be provided for the student where applicable.

Day 5 — ongoing:

- Where a student continues to be absent from school without due reason, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Absenteeism Policy. Head Lice infestation is easily treated and is not a disease. Once treatment has commenced, it is not a valid reason for absence from school.

ADDITIONAL KEY POINTS

- Coordination of the Head Lice Policy will be undertaken by a Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will be the contact person for staff and parents for dealing with head lice issues. Teachers who have concerns regarding the return to school of the child with head lice, or regarding the 'Confirmation of Commencement of Treatment' slip, should refer to the Deputy Principal.
- Under the *School Education Act 1999*, students found to have head lice may be excluded from school at the discretion of the Principal until treatment has begun and all live head lice are removed, in accordance with the Department of Health treatment advice. In practice, this means students can return to school the day after treatment has commenced, provided that effective treatment is completed consistently over the following 10 days. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for exclusion.
- The School advises that parents should use the Department of Health's recommended treatment as described in the Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- Students with long hair must wear it tied back and/or braided and pinned up.
- Students found to have head lice will be excluded as soon as practicably possible, except in circumstances described above for Day 4 and thereafter.
- School staff or the Community (School) Nurse do not undertake class head checks for head lice, as this is not an efficient or effective strategy for head lice control.
- The School Principal or a delegated school staff member may examine a student's hair only where there is reason to believe the child may have head lice, i.e. where eggs (nits) or crawling head lice have been sighted or where a child is scratching their head excessively.