

**WOODBURY BOSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**Headlice Policy**

**Scope and Application:** This policy has been developed in consultation with the Governing Body, staff and the Department of Health, and is operational directed. The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent, coordinated and cooperative approach to managing head lice in the school community. This policy will be regularly reviewed. (See below for policy review dates).

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The Parents' responsibilities are:**

- to be informed about head lice management by reading the Department of Health's Head Lice fact sheet or other information available in the community and as provided by the school;
- to regularly check their child's hair for head lice infestation;
- to treat their child's hair immediately if the child has head lice, using the information in the fact sheet;
- to inform the school and other close contacts if their child has a head lice infestation, and to confirm that treatment of their child's hair has commenced;
- to be aware of and follow the school's head lice management policy.

**The School's responsibility is:**

- to develop, implement and maintain a head lice management policy;
- to ensure that parents, staff and children are aware of the school's head lice policy, and that parents are provided with a copy of the Department of Health's Head lice fact sheet or other information as appropriate.
- **Whole school synchronised weekend check**  
Synchronised weekend head lice checks at home by parents are promoted at least twice yearly through the school newsletter, and more often if necessary.
- **Class Head Lice education**  
Head lice information is included in class activities where appropriate, for example:
  - › personal development – how to identify head lice and comb them out;
  - › science - life cycle of the head louse;
  - › drama - short, humorous play.
- **Head Lice Resource Parent**  
Where possible the School has a Head Lice Resource Parent, who is available to support parents, especially those that are having persistent difficulty removing the head lice.

Head Lice Resource Parents are volunteers who have successfully dealt with the frustrations of treating head lice in their own children. They keep up to date with the latest recommendations from the Department of Health.

Resource Parents **do not** undertake ongoing head lice treatment – that action remains the responsibility of the parents of a child with head lice.

**OR:**

*[Alternately, if there is no Head Lice Resource Parent:]*

For parents who have carefully followed the Department of Health's advice, but who have persistent difficulty in removing head lice, further advice is available from the school office or the Department of Health on 9388 4999.

Last Revised: July 2016  
Endorsed by GB: August 2016

Due for review: August 2018

## Headlice Procedure

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD IS FOUND TO HAVE HEAD LICE?

The School undertakes the following steps to ensure that a clearly defined process is followed when a child is found to have head lice:

#### Day 1:

- The student is given a brief, age-appropriate explanation about the head lice.
- A *Letter to Parents of a Child Found to have Head Lice* is sent home with the student at the end of the day. The *Letter* informs the parents that their child has head lice and requests that they commence treatment before the child returns to school. A copy of the Department of Health's *Head Lice Fact Sheet* is attached to this letter.
- Parents of the other students in the class are sent an information letter on the same day, asking them to check their child's hair for head lice.

#### Day 2:

- Once treatment has commenced, the parents of the child with head lice send the child back to school, along with the completed *Confirmation of Treatment* tear-off section of the letter.
- If the *Confirmation of Treatment* slip, or similar note, is not returned and the student is not able to confirm that treatment has commenced, then the parents will be contacted by phone to check that they have received the letter and fact sheet.
- If the *Letter to Parents* has been received but no treatment has started, then the parents are asked if they are experiencing any difficulty. Appropriate assistance is offered if parents are experiencing difficulty, e.g. serious financial hardship, or literacy or language difficulty.
- If the parents have no particular difficulty, then they are reminded of their responsibility to the child and to the school community. The parents are advised that the child must not return to school until treatment has begun. Parents must return a note to school with the child, or phone the school to confirm this.

#### Day 3:

- Where a student again returns to school without evidence of treatment, the school will contact the parents and advise that the student is immediately excluded from school, and will need to be collected. The child may return once treatment has commenced and the school notified. The parents will again be offered assistance by the school.
- Home work will be provided for the student, with teacher telephone support where appropriate.

#### Day 4 – 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. Where all parent support and information has been provided, and there is no remaining barrier to treatment, failure to treat is not a valid reason for absence from school.

**In the last resort only** – where considered appropriate by the Principal, the family may be referred to the Department of Community Development, e.g. where a child is experiencing ongoing psychological distress, or if infected sores result from untreated head lice infestation and the sores remain untreated. Informing parents of this decision prior to referral is at the discretion of the Principal.

### Checking hair for head lice

- **Checking a student who is believed to have head lice:**

In the case of an individual student, a staff member may examine a student's hair where there is reason to believe a student may have head lice, i.e. where eggs (nits) or crawling head lice have been sighted or where a child is scratching the head excessively. The *School Education Act 1999* authorises the school principal or a delegate to do this.

To ensure competency, the nominated staff member/s have received education in identifying active head lice infestation. Staff members are aware that a 'dry' head check may be unreliable. If, on inspection, no signs of infestation are seen, the parent is nevertheless informed and is asked to check using hair conditioner. A letter is sent home to inform parents.

## Exclusion of a student from school

- 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 being removed, in accordance with the Department of Health treatment advice. In practice, this means students can return to school the morning 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.
- Students found to have head lice will normally be excluded **at the end of the school day**, and not earlier, except in circumstances described above for Day 3 and thereafter, or at the discretion of the Principal or delegate.

For further information about head lice, go to [www.health.wa.gov.au/headlice](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/headlice)

### Conditioner and Combing Treatment for Headlice

Using hair conditioner and combing is the most effective way of finding, and treating, head lice. Conditioner and combing can be used for detection and/or treatment. The conditioner stuns the lice for some minutes so they can be easily removed. Conditioner and combing is reasonably inexpensive. It also avoids the use of harsh head lice chemicals.

#### Technique

1. Untangle dry hair with an ordinary comb.
2. Apply hair condition to dry hair (white conditioner makes it easier to see the lice). Use enough conditioner to thoroughly cover the whole scalp and all hair from roots to tips.
3. Use the ordinary comb to evenly distribute conditioner and divide the hair into four or more sections using hair clips.
4. Change to a metal head lice comb.
5. Start with a section at the back of the head. Place the teeth of the head lice comb against the scalp. Comb the hair from the roots through to the tips.
6. Wipe the comb clean on a tissue after every stroke. In a good light, check for head lice. Adult lice are easier to see – young lice can be difficult to see. A magnifying glass will help. You may see some eggs (nits).
7. Comb each section twice until you have combed the whole head. If the comb becomes clogged, use an old toothbrush, dental floss or pin to remove the head lice or eggs. Continue combing the whole head until all the conditioner is gone.
8. Repeat the conditioner and combing every second day until you find no more head lice for 10 consecutive days. It is important to continue for 10 days to remove all the adult lice and any young lice that hatch from the eggs, before they can reproduce.

(taken from *Staying Healthy in Child Care, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*)