

WOODBURY BOSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Head Lice Policy

Scope and Application: This policy and related procedures 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*).

Policy Statement

Head lice are a communicable infestation which cause irritation and can impact on comfort and learning. Head lice is a common condition that can be effectively and economically treated in the home.

The school encourages the members of the school community to promptly and effectively treat head lice infestations, so as to maintain the well-being of the children, and to prevent the spread to other members of the community.

When head lice are detected or suspected, the family will be informed, and the child may return to school once treatment has commenced.

If other students or families are being affected by ongoing ineffective management of head lice, the school *may* choose to exclude the student until the head lice are effectively managed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Parents' responsibilities are:

- to be informed about head lice management by reading the Head Lice information provided by the school, or other information available from the Department of Health or generally in the community;
- 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 an effective method of treatment;
- 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 and procedures.

The School's responsibility is:

- to develop, implement and maintain a head lice management policy and procedures;
- to ensure that parents, staff and children are aware of the school's head lice policy and procedures,
- maintain an information file on head lice, their life cycle and effective methods and treatment
- communicate head lice information within the school community as appropriate.
- **Whole school synchronised weekend check**
Synchronised weekend head lice checks at home by parents will be promoted through the school newsletter as deemed 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.

Appendix 1	LETTER TO PARENTS of children found with head lice
Appendix 2	LETTER TO CLASS PARENTS
Appendix 3	SYNCHRONISED WEEKEND HEAD LICE HEAD CHECK LETTER
Appendix 4	Head lice Treatment information

Last Revised: September 2022
Endorsed by GB: November 2022
Due for review: August 2024

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Head Lice 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 school's *Head Lice Information and Treatment methods* 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, for example, 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 Absentee 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 Communities – Child Protection and Family Services, for example 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 must receive education in identifying active head lice infestation, including that a 'dry' head check may be unreliable. If, on inspection, no signs of infestation are seen, the parent is nevertheless to be informed and 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

LETTER TO PARENTS of children found with head lice

Dear _____

At school today, _____ was found to have head lice.

Head lice are tiny insects that live in human hair. They are not caused by poor hygiene and they do not carry diseases. Head lice transfer from child to child when their hair is in close contact, e.g. while playing or doing schoolwork. For this reason, head lice infestation is relatively common in primary school children.

The attached **Head Lice Fact Sheet** explains how to check for and treat head lice. The Department of Health recommends the **10-Day Hair Conditioner Treatment** as an inexpensive and effective method. It is also important to use hair conditioner to check **all** other members of your household for head lice as well. If head lice are found, please use the *10-Day Hair Conditioner Treatment* on them, too.

Once you have commenced treatment and removed all head lice, your child may return to school. If there are still a few remaining eggs in the hair, your child can still return, provided you continue the 10-day treatment.

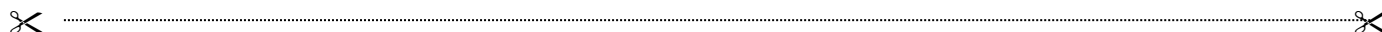
If you have difficulty with screening for or treating the head lice, further advice is available by ringing the school.

Finally, **please complete the section below and send it back to** _____ when your child returns to school, to confirm that you have begun the recommended head lice treatment.

Thank you

.....
Staff member name

___/___/___
date



CONFIRMATION OF COMMENCEMENT OF HEAD LICE TREATMENT

Child's name:

Date treatment commenced/...../.....

Treatment used: Hair Conditioner Insecticide

Other (please describe):

- I understand that head lice treatment must continue over a 10-day period.
- I have read the enclosed Department of Health *Head Lice Fact Sheet*

Parent's Signature:

Date:...../.../...

LETTER TO CLASS PARENTS

Dear Parent

At school today a member of the _____ room was found to have head lice.

Please examine your child's hair for signs of head lice. Remember that head lice are only about 2 to 4 mm long and are often hard to see. Head lice can move at up to 30 cm per minute and will rapidly run away when the hair is parted to search for them, so a 'dry' hair check is not always reliable. Applying hair conditioner to the dry hair slows the head lice down, so they can be trapped and removed by combing with a metal 'nit' comb.

The Department of Health's preferred treatment is the **10-Day Hair Conditioner Treatment** (see overleaf). However, advice on insecticide treatment is also provided in the Department's Head Lice Fact Sheet, available free from the school office or at www.health.wa.gov.au/headlice.

If head lice persist even after you have carefully followed the Department of Health's instructions, further advice is available from the office.

Finally, please complete and sign the section below, and return it to _____ tomorrow.

Thank you for being a part of this school's cooperative approach to head lice management.

.....
Staff member name _____ date ____/____/____
✂.....

Child's Name: _____

YES – I have checked my child's hair using hair conditioner according to the Department of Health instructions.

- I found no head lice or eggs
- I found some head lice and will continue to treat using the 10 Day Hair Conditioner Treatment
- I found some head lice and would like further advice on how to treat them.

NO – I have not checked my child's hair because:

.....
.....

- I am having difficulty with the hair check and I would like further advice or assistance. Please contact me at this number

Parent's signature: **Date:**.....

SYNCHRONISED WEEKEND HEAD LICE HEAD CHECK

Hi all

This weekend we are asking all families in the school to undertake a head lice check of their child's hair for head lice, using hair conditioner and a metal 'nit' comb.

Overleaf is some information on how to use hair conditioner to check for head lice. Hair conditioner is recommended as it 'stuns' head lice, making it easier to trap and remove them by combing with the 'nit' comb.

Regular, coordinated, weekend head lice checks are part of the school's head lice management program. Checking every student's hair **at the same time** ensures that any head lice infestation is identified early and treated promptly. This helps to prevent head lice from becoming an unnecessary and frustrating problem for parents and the school community.

Please complete and sign the section below and return it to school on Monday.

Thank you for being a part of our cooperative approach to head lice management.

.....
Staff member name

__/__/____
date

✂.....
Child's Name: _____

YES – I have checked my child's hair using hair conditioner according to the Department of Health instructions.

- I found no head lice or eggs
- I found some head lice and will continue to treat using the 10 Day Hair Conditioner Treatment
- I found some head lice and would like further advice on how to treat them.

NO – I have not checked my child's hair because:

.....
.....
.....

- I am having difficulty with the hair check and I would like further advice or assistance. Please contact me at this number:.....

Parent signature

Date

Conditioner and Combing Treatment for Head Lice

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. Using good lighting, 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, 4th Edition*)