

Head Lice Policy

Status: Review, August 2016.
Education Committee.

Rationale:

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. While they do not carry or transmit disease, head lice are the most common cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands. Therefore, they need to be controlled. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children because they can be embarrassing as well as difficult to control.

Aims:

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

Guidelines:

- The Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001 will be adhered to.
 - RHPS will follow Department guidelines - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/headlice.aspx>

Implementation:

It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this school that:

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice whenever there is an outbreak within their grade or the grade of a sibling, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method.
- A child can not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001). The Department excludes infected students until the day AFTER treatment has commenced.
- There are regular inspections of all household members and that they are treated if necessary.
- Notification is made to the school if their child/children are found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2001).
- Children with long hair should wear it tied back.
- A no blame attitude will be maintained in relation to families who are experiencing difficulty in controlling head lice.
- Members of the school community will act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with head lice issues.
- An agreement accepting the terms of the School Head Lice Policy will be signed annually by parents/carers.
- Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must present the signed declaration on the Action Taken Parent Response form indicating that appropriate treatment has commenced

To support parents/carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school.
- Include information and updates in school newsletters.
- Provide practical advice and maintain a no blame attitude to families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as Primary School Nurses, Community Health Centers and Local Government.

Policies

- Abide by the recommendations of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 School Exclusion Policy to inform parents if their child is found to have live lice and that their child is to be excluded from attending school until a day after appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Exclude only children with live insects from school.
- Develop a generic/blanket consent form, which parents sign at commencement of school year, to allow student head lice checks when deemed necessary.
- Provide written notification of any outbreak of head lice within a class.
- Follow up with additional documentation should a family experience repeated outbreaks of head lice.

Evaluation:

- The Head Lice policy shall be reviewed every 3 years by the Education Sub-Committee of the School Council.

References:

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/headlice.aspx>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/pages/headlice.aspx>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/headlice.aspx>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Documents/Scratching%20for%20Answers.pdf>