

# HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

## PURPOSE

To contain infestation of head lice among the school age population while maximizing students 'academic performance and minimizing absences due to unnecessary exclusion of students using nursing/medical best practices.

## STANDARD

- A. The school nurse will examine the head of any child suspected of having live lice or nits and notify the parent/guardian at the time of assessment if live lice or nits are found. Positive lice are not a public health emergency.
- B. Children returning to school after treatment for head lice will be examined by the school nurse or by the building Principal or designee to verify absence of live lice or nits prior to entering the classroom.
- C. The school nurse presents classroom discussion and instruction, upon request, regarding transmission and treatment of head lice. This information will establish evidence-based information for students with head lice.

## PROCEDURE

- A. Upon notification of suspected cases of head lice or nits, the school nurse or designee will examine the student.
  - 1. An infestation will be determined by looking closely though the hair and scalp for nits or live lice. Lice and nits (dirty-white to gray colored eggs attached to the hair shaft) are visible to the naked eye.
  - 2. If live lice or nits are found on the hair, the parent/guardian will be notified and the student will need to be picked up from school at that time. The parent/guardian will be provided with information on the biology of head lice, **methods to eliminate infestation**, and directions to examine household contacts for lice and nits. The student must check in with the school nurse upon returning to school the next day to verify treatment success.
  - 3. The school nurse or designee examines the students most likely to have had **direct head to head contact with the affected student (especially recent sleepovers)**. (Parents/guardians may be referred to their health care provider for follow up if there are positive findings, or lice are resistant to treatment.) If more than 4 students in one class are affected, all classmates will be checked and letters will be sent home informing parents of the issue.
  - 4. Notify Teacher and Principal of student positive for head lice or nits, and remind them of re-examination requirements upon return to school.
- B. Upon students return to school

1. Examine student's hair for presence of lice or nits at the beginning of school. Students are required to be live lice and nit free to return to school.
  2. Allow student to remain in school if no live lice or nits are present. A student will not remain in school if nits are found.
  3. Students should be rechecked for live lice or nits 7-10 days after initial passed screening to verify re-infestation has not occurred.
- C. Additional information relating to head lice:
1. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to verify treatment as soon as possible after notification.
  2. If the parent/guardian is unable to afford treatment, other resources will be explored.
  3. Students will be discouraged from direct head to head contact with other students. The school nurse will provide in-service education to staff regarding how to handle nits and/or live lice in the classroom.
  4. Staff will maintain the privacy of students identified as being infected with head lice.

*NOTE: The most common means of transmission is through physical/direct (head to head) contact. Indirect transmission is uncommon but may occur from shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair accessories that have been in contact with an infested person. Schools are not a common source of transmission.*