

**Policy:** *Head Lice Policy*

## Rationale

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents/guardians, teachers and children. Most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases; they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has had head lice.

This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

## Aims

Whilst parents/guardians have prime 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.

This school policy draws on information from the Scratching for Answers? information pamphlet and management guidelines.

## Implementation

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

- Regularly inspect your child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspect all household members and then treat them as necessary
- Not allow your child to attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009). Students may be treated one evening and return to school the next day but if one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem and the student re-attends with live head lice, the school will recommend the student return home for re-treatment.
- Tie your child's hair back if it is long.
- Notify the school if your child is affected and advise the school when the treatment has started.
- Notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they can check their children and treat if necessary.
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community around issues of head lice.

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

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- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the finding, treating and controlling head lice to parents and staff when/if the policy changes and ensure the most recent policy is published on the school website.
- Visually check a student's hair i.e. with no physical contact with the child, if the presence of head lice is suspected
- Provide access to the school first aid officer who parents/guardians can contact at the school if they have concerns or questions
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school.
- provision of classroom activities to give students an understanding of the habits and life-cycle of head lice in order to minimise the incidence of stigmatisation of particular students and families
- Include information and updates in school newsletters.
- Training of appropriate school personnel in detection and management of head lice at the school level.
- Where appropriate, and at the principal's discretion, provide an alert notice to the school community, when head lice has been detected in the school
- Encourage parents/guardians to identify treatment used and the commencement date, via an Action Taken form
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Follow the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge.
- Only recommend students with live insects stay home for treatment.
- Review the head lice policy annually and seek endorsement from the School Council/community.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community around issues of head lice.
- Seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

## Links and Appendices

Victorian Department of Health

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/head-lice/resources>

Scratching for Answers

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Documents/Scratching%20for%20Answers.pdf>

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