

Head Lice

Head lice are tiny wingless insects that feed on blood from the scalp. Lice do not carry diseases or spread contagious diseases. They move only by crawling and cannot jump or fly. Head lice are mostly spread by **direct head-to-head contact**. Head lice cannot survive for very long off the head. Therefore it is not common for head lice to spread by contact with clothing or personal items. Lice and nits (eggs) are usually found on the scalp, particularly around and behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the head. Head lice outbreaks are common in the United States among school aged children. Head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene or unclean homes or schools. Students of all socio-economic groups can be affected.

In accordance with revised guidelines from OSPI, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control:

1. Students shall **NOT be excluded** from the classroom due to head lice.
2. Students shall not be isolated, singled out or otherwise identified in any manner in the classroom if found to have head lice. All students in classroom will be reminded to not share hats, coats, combs with each other. All students in classroom will be reminded to not touch heads together.
3. All information regarding head lice will be communicated to the family by the school nurse or her designee only. Staff wishing to communicate with families regarding infestations, treatment methods, or other head lice information or concerns will do so after consulting with the school nurse.
4. Students suspected of having head lice may be sent to the office during the **last hour of the school day**, when classroom instruction is complete. These are signs of head lice:
 - Itching on the head and scalp.
 - A tickling feeling of something moving on the head or in the hair.
 - The detection of live lice.
 - Nits (lice eggs) or empty cases from hatched lice attached to hairs.
 - Sores or scratch marks on the head caused by scratching.
5. If head lice are found, the district nurse assigned to the school will be notified and the nurse or her designee will make contact with the parent. Letter notifying parents of lice found and lice treatment suggestions flyer will be sent home with student. Siblings or others living with the student should be checked for head lice.
 - 5.1. If a student is found to have multiple separate cases of lice in 4 months, the school nurse may work with the school counselor and parent to determine a plan of action to best help family and student.
6. District staff is not required/expected to remove lice from students at school. It is the expectation of the school district that parents will rid their student(s) of lice. The School Nurse, or students' medical provider may be a source of additional information and/ or resources available for parents and families.
7. Classroom and school wide head checks have been shown in studies to be ineffective in combating lice (Pediatrics, 2010). These types of large scale screenings will not be done. Students shall be screened individually based on symptoms (see #4 above).

8. The school nurse will determine the necessity of sending home letters regarding classroom infestations. Staff wishing to have letters sent home will need to communicate with their school nurse.

Cross Reference:

(cf.: 3122 – Excused and Unexcused Absences)
(cf.: 3410 – Student Health)
(cf.: 3430 – Student and Staff Safety and Welfare)
(cf.: 3600 – Student Records)

Reference:

"Clinical Report: Head Lice", Pediatrics Vol. 126 No. 2 August 1, 2010 pp. 392-403 (doi: 10.1542/peds.2010-1308)

"Head Lice Information for Schools" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Page last updated Sept. 24, 2013
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

"Pediculosis Management in the School Setting" National Association of School Nurses. Position statement revised 2011.
<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/smid/824/ArticleID/40/Default.aspx>

"Head Lice" Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff. Thompson, G; et.all. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2014. pages 75-78

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