

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

Background

The Division recognizes the concerns associated with the transmission of head lice in schools and therefore encourages close communication and cooperation among school staff, parents and public health nurses in the detection and resolution of instances of head lice. However, care must be taken to protect the individual student and family from undue invasion of privacy.

It is also recognized that lice infestations have little to do with cleanliness but spread randomly. Often the emotional reactions and stigma are due to lack of education and understanding. While the prime responsibility for preventing the spread of head lice rests with parents, it is important that the school and home cooperate fully in order to control further infestations.

Definitions

Lice – wingless insects with 6 legs that live on the human head

Nits – Eggs of lice, attached to the hair shaft, that may not be alive

Procedures

1. The protocols and expectations outlined by the regional health authority will form the basis of all school practices and decisions.
2. The school staff and administration shall work with public health authorities to describe and communicate to parents the preventative and remedial measures to be taken in dealing with head lice.
3. When a student is identified with head lice, the parents shall be contacted immediately by telephone, informed that a copy of the treatment requirements is being sent home at the end of the day in a sealed envelope, and advised that additional assistance or directions can be accessed from the local health authority. Additional copies of the treatment requirements may be provided for the parent to share with parents of relatives or friends with whom the student has contact.
4. Upon the detection of head lice, discretion should be used prior to removing the child from class, however head-to-head contact with others should be minimized.
5. The student will be permitted to return to school once the parent, or another caregiver, confirms that the treatment instructions have been followed.
6. Screening classmates and staff of an affected student may be conducted by a trained staff member or public health nurse, if available, in a confidential manner.

7. The school principal may send information to parents outlining the facts and procedures in the treatment of head lice.
8. If there are ongoing concerns about a particular case not responding to treatment or parents not being compliant with the required treatment, the principal shall inform the Public Health Authority and request assistance in the matter. If necessary, the Principal may arrange a case consultation that could include the family, the Public Health Authority, Child and Family Services, and a representative from Division Office.

August, 2007

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References

Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Public Health Act