



ST. ANDREW'S GRAMMAR

HEAD LICE POLICY

<i>Date</i>	<i>Modified By</i>	<i>Ratified</i>	<i>Review</i>
February 2014	Principal	2014	2015
July 2017	No Change	2017	2018



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Head Lice Policy

Introduction

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the human head, feeding on the scalp several times a day. Head lice reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. They are not dangerous, don't carry diseases and are not a sign of poor hygiene. *(definition from the Head Lice Fact Sheet, Department of Health, WA)*

Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice eg. when doing group work at school, playing, or hugging. Head lice can run from one head to another in seconds. Head lice cannot fly, jump or swim, but they can sometimes 'trapeze' from one hair to another. Brushes and combs are unlikely to transfer head lice and do not transfer viable eggs, as these are very hard to detach from the hair shaft. Head lice are not spread through bed linen, clothing or head gear, as they do not leave the scalp unless they are dead or dying. Eggs (nits) do not fall off until weeks after they have hatched as the egg shells are glued tightly to the hair shaft. *(definition from the Head Lice Fact Sheet, Department of Health, WA)*

It is essential that children with head lice are identified to prevent person-to-person spread of head lice. All teaching staff and/or the Principal may check a student's head for evidence of lice activity.

Procedure

Once a case of head lice has been confirmed by a teacher or staff member the student's parent/carer will be called and asked to collect them from the School. The student should not return to school until they have completed a head lice treatment.

A letter will be sent home for Parents/Carers for the rest of the students in the class informing them of a possibility of head lice transmission (see appendix 2).

Exclusion

The School Education Act 1999 states that the Principal may request non-attendance of a student for health reasons;

The Principal may require non-attendance for health reasons

- (1) *The principal of a school may require that a student —*
 - (a) *not attend the school; or*

- (b) *not participate in an educational programme of the school, during any day on which the student or any other student at the school is suffering from a medical condition to which this section applies.*
- (2) *This section applies to a medical condition that, on advice from the Executive Director of Public Health or a registered medical practitioner, the principal considers may be infectious, contagious or otherwise harmful to the health of persons who are at the school or participating in an educational programme of the school.*
- (3) *A requirement under subsection (1) is to be in writing given —*
- (a) *to a parent of the student;*
 - (b) *in the case of a student who has turned 18 or who is a prescribed child, to the student; or*
 - (c) *to a person whose details have been provided under section 16(1)(b)(ii)(II).*
- (4) *An adult who is notified of a requirement under subsection (1) is to ensure that it is complied with by the student. Penalty: \$500.*

While the Principal can exclude a student once head lice has been identified, it is important the student is treated with sensitivity. They can be given tasks that don't involve close group work but not necessarily excluded from class activities for the remainder of the day. The Principal, however, does have the authority to exercise discretion and withdraw a student from school programs.

The Principal can then require that a student is not allowed to attend school until parents confirm that treatment has commenced.

Treatment

The Department of Health, Communicable Disease Control has produced a Head Lice Fact Sheet that discusses in detail how head lice is to be treated. This document can be sent home to families when a case of head lice is identified.

http://www.health.wa.gov.au/docreg/Education/Diseases/Communicable/Parasitic/HP0149_head_lice_FS.pdf

Related Documents

Communicable Infections and Diseases Policy
Student Health Policies and Procedures
Duty of Care Policy

Appendix 1 – Extract from Communicable Disease Guidelines Booklet

Head lice is defined as a communicable disease in the Health Department's Communicable Disease Guidelines. This document is designed for schools and day care centres. This booklet can be found in hard copy at the Reception desk.

http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/3/258/3/communicable_disease_guidelines_booklet.pm

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Transmission:	Head-to-head contact with an infested person.
Incubation period:	7 to 10 days.
Infectious period:	Until lice and eggs (nits) are killed.
Exclusion:	Exclude until the day after treatment has commenced.
Contacts:	Do not exclude.
Treatment:	See Head Lice Fact Sheet.
Immunisation:	None.

Appendix 2 – Sample letter sent home to parents

The following letter is to be sent home with students if a fellow classmate has had a confirmed case of head lice.



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Head Lice

Dear Parents / Guardians

There has been an incident where a student in your child's class has **Head Lice**. I would encourage you to check your child's hair and take immediate action if necessary.

If you need any information regarding Head Lice information can be found at Reception.

Please be aware, due to health regulations, students should not return until hair has been fully treated. Children with hair that is past their shoulders in length are required to have it neatly tied up.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Cronin', written in a cursive style.

Wayne Cronin
Head of Primary School

Date