



**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
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# ST. ANDREW'S GRAMMAR

## 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.

### Objective

To prevent the spread of head lice by head-to-head contact between students, staff and visitors at St. Andrew's Grammar.

St. Andrew's Grammar refers to the School Education Act 1999 and excludes students with head lice from school until the treatment has commenced. The student may return to school when all live head lice have been removed. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for continued exclusion from St. Andrew's Grammar.

However, parents must continue treatment over the following 10 days to ensure that all eggs and hatchlings have been removed. Please find details below of treatment of Head lice.

The number of cases of head lice in the School will be reduced if there is an appropriate education program and co-operation between the School, the home and the general community.

## 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.

## **Guidelines**

1. Children and parents are to be made aware of the problem and the method of treatment via distribution of a WA Health Department publication regarding lice infestations and through the School Newsletter.
2. Suspect children's hair will be inspected by teaching staff on request.
3. Parents will be notified by the Administration if head lice are found.
4. Children with live lice will be required to go home as soon as possible. They are not to be left in Sick Bay, but may remain seated in the Administration entrance until collected by a parent/guardian. They may not return to their classroom.
5. Children with eggs only (nits) will be required to be treated with the appropriate lotion- Parents must be contacted and the children will not be eligible to return to school until treatment has occurred and all eggs are removed. These children do not have to be removed immediately.
6. The child will be re-admitted to school when there is no more evidence of live lice or a minimal number of eggs (nits) in the hair.

## **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](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

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

## Appendix 1



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health

# Head lice – What parents need to know

Whether your child's hair is long or short, clean or dirty, many families with school aged children and teenagers will have contact with head lice.

Be prepared and know how to treat and control head lice if there is an outbreak at your child's school.

### What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live in people's hair and feed on the skin on their head (scalp). They lay eggs (nits) on the hair closest to the scalp (hair shaft). Some lice can cause itching.

Head lice are not dangerous, do not carry diseases, and are not a sign of poor hygiene (cleanliness).

### How do people catch head lice?

Head lice spread by head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. This kind of contact includes group work at school, playing or hugging.

Head lice can run from one head to another in seconds. They cannot fly, jump or swim, but they can swing from one hair to another.

Brushes and combs are unlikely to spread head lice or their eggs as they are very hard to detach from the hair shaft.

Head lice are not spread through bed linen, clothing or head gear (hats and helmets) because they do not leave the scalp unless they are moving to another person, or when they are dead or dying.

### Signs and symptoms

Your scalp may itch as your skin reacts to the saliva of the head lice. This itchiness can take weeks to develop. If you have had head lice before, your skin may become less sensitive and there may be little or no itch.

You may also be able to see head lice crawling in your hair, although they can be difficult to spot as they move quickly.

- Adult lice are usually dark brown and about 2 to 3 mm long.
- Hatchlings (young lice) are often a lighter brown colour and about 1 to 2 mm long.
- Eggs will be attached to the hair shaft. They can be very tiny and hard to see, especially newly-laid eggs close to the scalp. They are grey-white and about the size of a grain of salt.

### How to check for head lice

Head lice can be difficult to find. Start by checking the hair close to the scalp, especially behind the ears and at the back of the neck. Look for lice and eggs.

If you think head lice may be present, follow these four steps:

**Step 1:** Apply plenty of hair conditioner (generic 'home' brands are fine) to dry hair until all hair is covered. The conditioner slows the head lice down so they can be trapped in the comb. Comb the conditioner through the hair with an ordinary comb or brush.



**Step 2:** Separate the hair into sections. Gently comb each section at a time with a metal fine-toothed comb (available from most chemists) in four directions - forwards, backwards, left and right.

**Step 3:** After brushing through each section, wipe the comb over from the comb onto a white paper towel or a check towel for dark adult lice and pale hatched nymphs. You may need to use a magnifying glass and a good light, such as sunlight, to see the lice, nymphs and eggs. Continue combing and checking each section until all the hair has been checked.

**Step 4:** When you have finished, rinse the conditioner out and dry the hair.

It is a good idea to discuss with children while you check for head lice by offering them a favourite video, game or book.

### How do I treat head lice?

To treat head lice you must get rid of all the lice. There are two ways to do this:

1. Try the 10-day hair conditioner and comb method
2. Buy and use head lice lotion or shampoo, as follows: follow the instructions on the packet

There is no need to treat the whole family unless they also have head lice.

### The 10-day hair conditioner and comb method

This method is based on the **steps** under 'How can I check for head lice?' and is repeated every other day over a **10 day** period.

This method focuses on removing adult head lice from hair and breaking the egg-laying cycle.

Eggs hatch 7 to 10 days after being laid.

If you do this method once and lice or no adult head lice are missed, a cycle of outbreaks will occur. By repeating the method over a 10 day period you increase the chance of removing all head lice until no eggs are left.

Remember - after **step 3**, you may need to use lotion to remove any eggs that were missed during combing.

### Head lice lotion or shampoo

If you choose to use head lice lotion or shampoo, always read and follow the instructions carefully. The active ingredients in these treatments are insecticides (chemicals used to kill or control insects).

Three types have been shown to be effective and safe for treating head lice. These are permethrin, pyrethrin and malathion.

Some other treatments may **not** have been properly tested and may be ineffective, expensive or even unsafe.

Check the product label for active ingredients.

Remember - read and follow the instructions that come with the product.



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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

**XXX**

**Head of School**

Date