

Adopted: _____

Revised: 4-18-11

599 MANAGING HEADLICE

I. FACTS AND INFORMATION

PLEASE DO NOT PANIC!!

The head louse is one of three types of lice that infest people. These tiny insects make their home in human hair and feed on human blood. Head lice multiply rapidly, laying small greyish-colored oval-shaped eggs (nits) which they glue to the hair, close to the scalp.

Although head lice can be hard to find, you can see it if you look closely. They are most often found along the hairline at the back of the head, neck, and behind the ears. Nits should not be confused with an accumulation of hair spray, hair gel or dandruff. Dandruff can be easily flicked off the hair, nits cannot because they are firmly attached to individual hairs.

Anyone can get head lice. They are not a sign of being dirty. Most people don't know they have lice until they see them. One telltale sign of head lice is a persistent itching of the scalp which is sometime accompanied by infected scratch marks or what appears to be a rash.

Pediculus humanus (human head lice) is a parasite of the human host. It is 2-4 mm long (about the size of a sesame seed) with six claw-like legs and a flat, greyish-brown wingless body. Lice cannot jump or fly, but can crawl up to 12 inches per minute. It has a 30 day life span. During this time, the female firmly attaches a total of 60-150 eggs, or nits, with a cement-like substance to hair shafts near the scalp. Eggs hatch in 7-10 days. This nymph will die if a blood meal is not acquired in 24 hours. Eggs will survive off of the human host for up to 10 days, but will not hatch in that time without the incubation temperature of the human host. Adult lice cannot survive off the human body for more than two days. They do not reproduce off of the body and they do not live on pets.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. If a student is found to have head lice (live lice) while at school, the school will take the following action:

****The student's parents or guardians will be notified and will be asked to take the child home for treatment.**

1. Treatment will consist of washing the child's hair with one of several available lice shampoos and then combing the child's hair thoroughly with a "nit" comb, which should be provided with the shampoo. There are several shampoos available without prescription, and some available only with a prescription.
2. All persons in the household shall be treated, regardless if lice or nits are found on them or not.
3. All clothing must be washed using very hot or very hot dryer cycle. (It is the heat that kills the lice.)

4. All bedding must be laundered as in #3. If bedding or linens cannot be washed or dried, place them in a large plastic bag and store as such for at least two weeks. This applies to all clothing that cannot be laundered.
5. Wash or store all outside clothing, especially hats, scarves, jackets.
6. Bed mattresses, sofas, chairs, seats in the car must be vacuumed thoroughly. Carpeting must also be vacuumed.
7. Combs and brushes should be soaked in a pediculocidal solution such as the shampoo used for treatment for 10 minutes. Another treatment is to soak these items in very hot water for the same amount of time.
8. Retreatment of the hair is necessary in 7-10 days from the original treatment.
9. Students may return to school after the first treatment and with freshly laundered clothes.

B. If a student is found to have only nits and no lice, the school will take the following action:

****The student's parents or guardians will be notified and information obtained regarding recent lice treatments.**

1. If the student has had a recent lice treatment, (within the past week to 10 days) the student will be allowed to stay in school. Information will be given or sent to the parent/guardian regarding second treatment and other environment care/treatment.
2. If the student has not had a recent lice treatment, the discovery of nits will be considered an active, untreated case of lice and the student will be sent home with parent/guardian and information about hair and environmental cleaning will be provided.

****If the school personnel cannot reach parent/guardian and the student must stay in school, the student will be instructed on ways to prevent the spread of lice to classmates while finishing out the school day. Information will be sent home with the child.**

****All students with or without head lice will be informed of ways to help prevent the spread of lice, i.e., do not share combs, brushes or hair accessories. Do not share caps or hats. If necessary, students who share lockers will be asked to separate belongings with large plastic bags.**

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)