

## WALDWICK PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Head Lice Policy and Procedure

Waldwick Public School District has developed the following head lice procedure in consultation with the Certified School Nurse, School Physician, and Department of Health. This procedure is based on the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers, and children. This school procedure is intended to outline roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

While parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

#### **Background**

Head lice are most commonly found in children 3-12 years of age. Head lice do not pose a health hazard, transmit disease, nor serve as a sign of poor hygiene, child abuse, or neglect. Nits are not equivalent to head lice, since nits cannot be transmitted from person-to-person, and therefore should not result in school exclusion. Head lice, on the other hand, are transmitted as a result of direct head-to-head contact. Transmission of head lice in the classroom is uncommon and lice are rarely present in more than 5% of students.

#### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:**

- To learn about head lice infestation and management by reading the Head Lice information sheets available on the school health website
- To regularly check their child's hair for head lice infestation
- To treat their child's hair immediately if the child has a head lice infestation based on recommendations from their health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control
- To inform the school and other close contacts if their child has a head lice infestation and to confirm that treatment of their child's hair has commenced
- To be aware of and follow the school district's head lice management procedure
- To use only safe and recommended practice to treat head lice
- To maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatizing/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- To act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community, especially around issues of head lice

#### **Community (School) Nurse's role:**

Prevention strategies are an important part of controlling the spread of head lice. A system wide approach to preventing and controlling the spread of a head lice infestation shall include the following:

- Provide in-service education for all staff with emphasis on detection, mode of transmission, treatment, and control measures

- Prepare research based educational materials on detection, mode of transmission, treatment, and control of head lice which will be distributed annually at the beginning of the school year, or more frequently if required
- Institute school and classroom practice that include:
  - Assign individual hooks for student belongings
  - Hats and coats are to be kept in student backpacks
  - Encourage students with long hair to wear it tied back, braided, or pinned up.
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatizing/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Exclude only students with live insects from school
- Encourage students to learn about head lice in order to help remove any stigma or “bullying” associated with the issue
- The school nurse will not routinely undertake class head checks for lice, as this is not an efficient or effective strategy for head lice control. Head lice can move at up to 30 cm per minute. They move rapidly away from searching hands and so an infestation can easily be missed. Most children do not have head lice, so valuable class time is wasted checking children unnecessarily. In addition, it is the responsibility of the individual parent to check their own child’s head for head lice.

### **Management of Head Lice Cases**

- Any staff member who suspects a case of head lice will report it immediately to the school nurse or Principal.
- Any student identified by the school nurse as having a head lice infestation will be sent home as soon as possible and excluded from school until an initial treatment has been completed. Any student identified with viable nits, will be sent home at the end of the school day.
- Verbal and written instructions for treatment will be given to the family of each identified student. Instructions shall include recommendations that are consistent with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ guidelines and the Centers for Disease Control, as well as a referral to their health care provider.
- Encourage parents to notify child care providers and other close personal contacts.
- Classmates of affected students will be examined by the school nurse at his/her discretion.
- Affected students will be re-examined upon returning to school for evidence of live lice. Students will be readmitted to school after the first treatment with a written or verbal confirmation from the parent/guardian that the initial treatment has been completed and if there is no evidence of live lice.
- Consult with the local Board of Health and School Physician as needed (during cases of outbreaks and individual resistant cases).

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

[http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/faq/headlice\\_faq.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/faq/headlice_faq.pdf)

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Pages/Signs-of-Lice.aspx>

<https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/13/head-lice-management-in-the-school-setting>