

General McLane School District **Head Lice Procedure**

Our procedure on lice comes from recommendations made by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses based on latest research. All resources agree that the management of head lice should not disrupt the educational process. There are no diseases associated with head lice, and in-school transmission is considered to be rare.

Our procedure is that once a live louse is detected, the parents are called and asked to take the student home and they are instructed about proper treatment of the student and their home. The classroom teacher of the student will be notified to help them take proper prevention measures to manage the classroom, but the information is to remain confidential and not be shared with anyone outside of the classroom. The student may return back to school once the student has been treated and the school nurse will recheck the student's head to ensure they have been treated and that there are no live lice. If only nits (eggs) are detected, but no live lice, the parent is notified and the student is sent home normally at the end of the day. The parents are to retreat the student in 7 to 10 days (or according to the lice product directions) to ensure treatment is effective in breaking the life cycle of the lice.

In 2007, international guidelines established for effective control of head lice infestations reinforced that policies that require a student to be free of nits to attend school, known as "no nit" policies were based on misinformation rather than objective science and were therefore unjust and should be discontinued. The CDC cites the following reasons to discontinue "no nit" policies in school:

- * New treatment options kill both live lice and nits.
- * Many nits are more than a 1/4 inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or many in fact may be empty shells, also known as casings. Nits need the warmth and humidity of the scalp to hatch.
- * Nits are cemented to hair shafts and unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- * The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- * Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by non-medical personnel.

The other research to keep in mind is that by the time a child with an active head lice infestation (which means they have live lice) has been identified, he or she may have had the infestation for one month or more and, therefore, poses little additional risk of transmission to others.

The following steps can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Check everyone in the house and only treat those who have lice or nits. Some treatments have chemicals in them, and it is not recommended to be used if no lice or eggs are seen.
- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid re-infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

To help control a head lice outbreak in a community, school, or camp, children can be taught to avoid activities that may spread head lice.

When managing head lice, remember that lice are around all year long and these precautions mentioned would be beneficial all year long.