

# Head Lice Guidelines

Dear Parent/Guardians,

Your child may have been exposed to head lice. To be sure that your child does not have it, **PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HAIR EACH MORNING FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS.**

## **What to look for:**

Head lice are very small 'bugs', about the size of a sesame seed, that only live on human scalps and are common cause of infestations on school aged children but can affect any one. The female louse is difficult to see as lice flee from light but she lays eggs, called nits, by 'cementing' them to hair shafts at the scalp surface. They are small grayish white or yellowish specks that can be distinguished from dandruff in that the cementing makes them very difficult to remove from the hair except by pulling them off between fingernails. The nits/lice are **most often seen behind the ears and along the nape of the neck.**

Lice can not fly or jump or live on other animals. They run very quickly from person to person or from personal objects (such as hats, combs, sweatshirts) to other persons. They can not live off the human body for more than 3 days. They feed on human blood which causes the intense itching that can be distracting to your child's sleeping and learning. Check all household members and close contacts.

## **If you find nits and/or lice:**

You do not need to see a doctor. First, **TREAT THE INFESTED PERSON** with a lice shampoo or crème rinse. Crème rinses such as Nix are very effective in that they continue to work after being rinsed especially if the hair is not washed again for 2 days. No matter what product is used, follow all directions carefully. Do not leave the product on the scalp longer than directed. Do not use it again for 7-10 days, when and if the next laying of eggs can occur.

At the same time, **CLEAN ALL BEDDING AND CLOTHING** that the infested person uses. They must be washed in HOT water and dried on the HOT cycle for at least 20 minutes to kill the lice. Unwashable items such as stuffed animals and pillows can be dry cleaned or placed in sealed plastic bags for 2 weeks to kill any lice or nits that may hatch out. Soak all combs and brushes in HOT water for one hour. Vacuum carpets, rugs, furniture, and mattresses daily for two weeks. There is no need to use pesticides in the house.

**CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HAIR and REMOVE ALL NITS EVERY DAY FOR 2 WEEKS!!** This is the most important action you can take to stop an infestation. A metal nit comb or fingernails can be used to strip the hair shaft of the nits. One lice can lay 200 eggs so it is very important that no nits hatch and grow to adult lice. **Shampoos and crème rinses DO NOT KILL THE NITS, YOU HAVE TO REMOVE THEM INDIVIDUALLY.** Daily head checks will ensure that any missed lice are detected and the whole process does not have to be repeated. Your child must be NIT-FREE to return to school.

**PLEASE INFORM THE SCHOOL** if your child has lice as we can notify other parents to check their children and stop the spread of lice. Affected students are **NOT IDENTIFIED** to their peers. This is a very common occurrence in schools.