

GLENDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Rationale

While parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents and students.

Guidelines

- The Head Lice Policy follows the DET guidelines as documented in the <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/headlice/default.htm> and *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001*.
- Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.
- Head lice can infect any person and as such, the control of head lice is a student wellbeing issue as well as a matter of Occupational Health And Safety.
- The Principal has a duty of care for the wellbeing and safety of all students and a responsibility for the Occupational Health And Safety of staff.
- Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- Most school will have some students with head lice at any given time and it will be important to minimise anxiety caused by the presence of head lice.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information, by offering a screening process, and by alerting parents to the presence of lice when detected.
- The school's comprehensive management plan incorporates practices and strategies to respond and control infestations promptly, to ensure that effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed and to provide parents with comprehensive advice about the use of safe treatment practices which do not place children's health at risk.

Implementation

- The Head Lice Management Plan incorporates the following:
 - o Parents will be encouraged in the school information book and periodically in the school newsletters to regularly (preferably once per week) inspect their child/ren's hair for lice or lice eggs and the need to commence treatment if lice are found.
 - o Parents will be urged to notify the school if head lice are detected and advise when treatment has commenced.
 - o The school nurse or Assistant Principal will act as head lice resource/support personnel and will be available to provide support and information to parents.
 - o At the commencement of each year and during the year as necessary, up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice will be distributed to parents and staff.
 - o Parents and staff will be advised of the Health Department website <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>
 - o The school nurse is able to conduct head lice screening checks of staff on request and on children with parent permission.
 - o Parents will be asked to sign a permission form allowing their children to be screened by the school nurse for the presence of head lice.
 - o Only children whose parents have signed and returned the permission form will be checked.

- o To help reduce stigma and maintain confidentiality following head lice inspections, all children screened will be provided with a confidential proforma letter indicating to parents the results of the screening as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- o The proforma will also be given to the children in the relevant class whose parents have not given permission for a screening check, to advise them of the presence of head lice in the class, to recommend that they check their children's hair at home and commence treatment if eggs or live lice are found.
- o The proforma letter of notification to parents of those students found to have head lice will incorporate a detachable slip at the bottom, asking parents to indicate the treatment used and when it commenced.
- o In the case of parents who do not provide written permission for head lice check, if live lice are observed on their children's hair, the parents will be advised of the presence of live lice.
- o Consistent with *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001*, the Principal will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that they are to refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice.
- o Children detected with live head lice are to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced and live lice have been removed.
- o The Principal has the discretion to withdraw a child infected with live lice from direct contact with other children.
- o The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion.
- o The Principal will ensure that parents of children detected with live lice are provided with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- o Parents will be advised that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem and that removal of the eggs attached to the hair shafts is critical in the control of head lice infestations.
- o If a child re-attends school with live lice, the school may again exclude the child until the live insects have been removed.
- o The Principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy outbreaks.

Evaluation

The Head Lice Policy will be evaluated and reviewed by Curriculum Committee in consultation with the School Nurse.