

## HEAD LICE POLICY



### Rationale

School is aware of the national problem of head lice and how it can sometimes affect children of a primary school age at home and in school.

This policy attempts to set out the duties and responsibilities of parents, the school and the Health Authorities in dealing with head lice. It sets out what school can and cannot do legally as well as providing some practical advice as to how to tackle head lice.

### Parent's/Carers/Guardians Duties

As the carer of a child you should;

- Undertake regular weekly and where appropriate daily checks to ensure that your child/family is not affected. This should be done with a detector comb as noted in the advice section. All family members should be checked.
- Inform all contacts of the family / friends who may have come in to head to head contact for a minute or more in the last month
- Seek advice from a medical practitioner (Pharmacist/ Health Visitor/ Doctor about using an approved lotion and treat using this method in the recommended way.

### School will undertake to

Provide information about Headlice on an annual basis and more regularly if many cases arise.

- Encourage parents to seek advice from Sophie Adey, the Home Liaison Officer if they find Head lice to be a problem.
- Maintain a visual check on pupils.
- Alert parents (class/year group) via a text/ letter if an outbreak is noted
- Alert individual parents by letter/ phone call if a more persistent case is noted.
- Invite these parents to meet with our Home School Link Worker to discuss treatment/ provide advice.
- The Home School Link Worker (with the parent's permission) will then; refer that parent/child to the School Nurse/ Health Visitor enabling that parent to gain support.

Offer to provide assistance with wet combing and/or other treatment.

### Treatment

There are two treatment options. The first is the wet combing method as set out below. **Wet combing is by far the most effective method.** The other is to use an insecticide lotion.

**“Persistence is the key to getting rid of these annoying insects!”**

## **Wet combing**

- 1 Shampoo the hair, rinse, apply lots of conditioner and use a wide-toothed comb to untangle and straighten.
- 2 Once the tangles have gone, section the hair and comb with a fine-toothed detection comb from root to end. Comb one section at a time, paying particular attention to the back of the neck and the area around the ears.
- 3 Check the comb for live lice between each stroke and remove them.
- 4 When the whole head of hair has been combed through and checked, rinse off the conditioner.
- 5 Check all family members at the same time and arrange treatment if lice are found.

If you discover head lice, inform any close contacts, so they and their families know they should check too.

The time required to wet comb the whole head can range from 2 minutes for short, straight hair to 30 minutes for long, curly hair.

## ***Bug Busting***

This is a non-insecticide alternative to lotions that involves combing out all lice with a fine-toothed detection comb using the wet combing method described above. To be effective, Bug Busting needs to be repeated every 3 days for up to 3 weeks to ensure that all head lice are removed.

The 'Bug Buster Kit' is available at a charge as set out below. Only one kit is required for a family and it is reusable. The kit, which includes an illustrated guide and combs for the detection and removal of head lice, is available from some pharmacies and also by mail order from:

## ***Lotions***

You can ask your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or doctor about which lotion is most effective. People with asthma or allergies, pregnant or breastfeeding mothers, and parents or carers of very young children should always ask their doctor or pharmacist about which treatments are safe for them.

Note the following advice for using lotions:

**Do not use lotions unless you find a living, moving louse. Head lice may become resistant to lotions if they are used too often.**

**If live head lice are still being found after two treatments, ask your doctor, pharmacist, health visitor or school nurse for advice.**

**Follow the instructions on the packet carefully. These will tell you how to apply the lotion, how long to leave it on the hair and when any repeat application is required for the treatment to be effective. The treatment method may vary between different lotions.**

**Although the lotion will kill the lice, it will not kill the eggs. You will need to apply the lotion again after 7 days to kill any newly hatched baby lice. Again, this procedure may vary between different lotions, so follow the instructions on the packet carefully.**

**Treatment does not prevent infections.**

**Seek advice from your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or doctor about which treatments are effective – not all those on the market are. In particular, there is no evidence that ‘electronic zappers’, tea tree oil or preparations that claim to contain insecticides of natural origin are effective.**