



Portland South Primary School

HEAD LICE Policy

Rationale:

- 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.
- Anyone can catch head lice.
- 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.

Aims:

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

Implementation:

- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children the school has a role in the management of head lice infections. The school will assist by offering up-to-date information, by a screening process, and by alerting parents of lice when detected.
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form at time of enrolment allowing their children to be screened by our trained personnel for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be checked.
- Where live lice have been detected or visually sighted, the student is immediately excluded from class, consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2009. Parents are notified and asked to collect their child as soon as possible. Students with live lice may not return to school until the appropriate treatment has been carried out. Children will be checked on return to school. N.B. Persistent scratching of scalp or students persistent comment of itchy head is usually an indicator of possible headlice. Staff are instructed to conduct a whole class check on this basis.
- Siblings enrolled in other classes will be checked before the parent phone call home.
- The principal/office or aide will alert parents of other students in the same class to the presence of head lice using a Head Lice Alert Notice. All students must be screened at home and return the report form at the base of the notice the following day. Students who fail to return this report are screened by staff at school.

- The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion, however parents will be notified when live eggs have been detected so that treatment for removal of the eggs can take place before they hatch.
- 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.
- The school will act with confidentiality and sensitivity to reduce anxiety and stigma for the students and parents.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to assist the school by
 - a) ensuring that students with hair longer than shoulder length tie their hair back
 - b) regularly (once per week) inspecting their child/children's hair for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the most effective method)
 - c) regularly inspecting all household members followed by treatment if head lice or lice eggs are detected
 - d) notifying the school and advising when treatment has commenced upon detection of head lice.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed in 2023.

This policy was last reviewed in November 2019