

## HEAD LICE POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following guidance leaflets:

- NHS guidance [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx).
- British Association of Dermatologists information leaflet: [27.10-Head-lice-pdf.pdf \(bad.org.uk\)](http://27.10-Head-lice-pdf.pdf)

### Background

Head lice are insects that live in the hair and on the scalp of humans. They cannot jump and do not have wings so cannot fly. They are obligate parasites. This means that they cannot survive without us, feeding only on human blood, which they take from the blood vessels in the scalp.

Head lice have been around for as long as humans, moving from head to head to reproduce and feed. Head lice do not have a preference for the heads that they live on and will move easily from one to another by simply walking across when two heads are touching. As many as three million people a year in the UK catch head lice. There is no statutory requirement to notify the authorities when an incidence of head lice occurs and most cases are dealt with at home rather than through the medical profession.

### Introduction

Head lice are insects that live in the hair and on the scalp of humans. They cannot jump and do not have wings so cannot fly. They are obligate parasites, which means that they cannot survive without us, feeding only on human blood, which they take from the blood vessels in the scalp. Their eggs are known as 'nits'. Head lice are very common in schools.

At Pippins School we believe being open and honest about head lice is the best way of keeping the problem down. Sometimes parents are shocked and upset when head lice are discovered. We urge all parents/carers to be pro-active in preventing the spread of head lice and to respond quickly if head lice are discovered.

We do not expect pupils to be kept away from school if head lice are discovered. We do, however expect children to be **treated immediately and before they return to school.**

The school is not able to screen pupils for head lice. However, we work closely with the health service to make sure that all information available to parents is accurate and up-to-date.

### Objectives and targets

The purpose of this policy is to advise parents/carers on how to detect and treat head lice so that their presence in the school can be minimised if not eradicated.

### Action plan

We recognise that having head lice can be an upsetting experience for both children and parents. We also recognise that even when parents have acted promptly, re-infestation can occur. By being open and honest with children we can educate them to the problem of head lice and to ways of minimising the risk of infestation.

There are lots of products to treat head lice, and there are non-invasive procedures that can be followed, but whatever the treatment choice, these four steps should always be followed:

- Detection

September 2024

Review: September 2025

- Treatment
- Check
- Prevention

### **Detection**

Check regularly to see if there is an infection.

- If the scalp becomes itchy, children should inform parents immediately so that the cause might be investigated. Parents should look out for children scratching their heads frequently.
- At least once a week and whenever the hair is washed.
- Be confident about what you are looking for.

### **Treatment**

Use your treatment method of choice.

- A course of treatment for head lice should be completed in line with the directions given. Care should be taken to keep hair away from naked flames (eg cigarettes) while any product is on the hair because some products are flammable and could cause nasty burns to the hair and scalp.
- Remember regular use of the same product can render that method ineffective.
- Whatever method you use you must use a fine-tooth comb to remove and destroy lice and nits, (unhatched lice eggs or their empty, hatched egg shells).

### **Check**

Always be sure to check that the treatment has been effective and keep up those regular checks in the future!

- Proprietary lotions indicate how and when treatment should be given.
- Following any infestation, check daily.

### **Prevention**

While it is impossible to eradicate head lice completely, because head lice are passed on by contact between the hairs on two heads, it is sensible to:

- Have hair tied back; the school recommends that all long hair is tied back neatly.
- Encourage children to comb/brush their hair regularly.

### **Monitoring and evaluating**

Outbreaks of infestations with head lice will be monitored and this policy will be evaluated for its effectiveness in reducing the incidences of outbreaks of head lice infestations.

### **Reviewing**

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the headteacher and updated if incidences of head lice infestations increase or in the light of any further recommendations by healthcare professionals.