



## 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 the most common cause of an itchy head; and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be eradicated.

## AIMS

- ▶ To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively to minimise the outbreak.
- ▶ 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

- ▶ Anyone can catch head lice.
- ▶ Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and by sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and head gear such as hats.
- ▶ Teachers or staff members suspecting that a child had head lice, are to report their concerns to the office staff who will organise for an appropriately trained person to carry out the necessary inspections, providing a consent form has been received. Visual checks without contact may be authorised by the principal.
- ▶ Upon positive identification of live head lice, the principal will ensure that the parents of any infected child are contacted as soon as possible and informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, School Exclusion Table, until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.
- ▶ The parents of all students in that class will be informed of the outbreak by letter and the principal or representative will also provide them with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- ▶ Upon return to school, each excluded child will be required to provide an assurance by the parent that treatment has taken place and what treatment was administered, or undergo another inspection by an authorised officer.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ All parents will be asked to tick a 'consent to head lice inspection' as part of the pupil enrolment form. No physical inspections will be carried out on students who do not tick this option.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

*Related Legislation:  
Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001*