

St. Joseph's School, Sorrento

Head Lice Policy and Procedures



Date Reviewed: June 2021

Next Review: June 2023

RATIONALE

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. 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.

DEFINITION

Pediculus humanus capitis, parasitic insects found on the heads of people. Head lice are most often found on the scalp behind the ears and near the neckline at the back of the neck. The lice hold onto the hair with hook-like claws at the end of each of their six legs. Head lice are rarely found on the body, eyelashes, or eyebrows. These insects lay their sticky, white eggs on the hair shaft close to the root, while hatched lice stay mostly on the scalp. Head lice infection is very common and easily acquired by coming in close contact with someone who has [head lice](#), infested clothing, or infested belongings. Preschool and elementary school children and their families are most often infested.

AIMS

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their 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 may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- 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 and by alerting parents to reported cases of lice.
- The school principal will ensure all teachers and aides are provided with professional development regarding head lice, who will then be authorised to carry out visual checks of students heads for head lice (observations without touching of the students head or hair). The principal will also identify specific staff members to carry out head lice inspections (physical examinations) of students head and hair for the presence of head lice.
- A section of the enrolment form asks parents for permission to allow their child to be inspected by our specific staff members or parents for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have signed this permission section will be inspected.

- All children inspected will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the inspection, as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- **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 their child is to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced.**
- The principal will also provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must indicate that appropriate treatment has commenced. All excluded children to undergo another inspection from our trained head lice inspectors upon recommencement of school.
- 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 infestations.
- When cases of head lice are reported to teaching staff a note will be sent home to the children in the same class as the infected children. This will only report that incidents have been reported and that parents are asked to be vigilant. No names or personal details of any child is to be included.

Evaluation:

This policy will be updated as we receive information from the Health Authorities.