

## 4.18 HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT POLICY

### Purpose

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.

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 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

1. 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 of lice when detected.
2. 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. **(Head Lice Check Report)**
3. The school will also provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
4. Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must present the signed declaration indicating that appropriate treatment has commenced **(Head Lice Treatment)**.
5. 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.
6. To support parents/guardians and the broader school community to achieve a consistent collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:
  - Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
  - Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/ staff attending the school.
  - Include information and updates in School Newsletters.
  - Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid blaming or stigmatizing families who are experiencing difficulties with control measures.
  - Inform parents when there is an outbreak of head lice in a class. Please refer to **Head Lice Reporting Letter**.
  - Abide by the recommendations of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the Principal or person in charge, and only exclude children from school with live insects.
  - Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.

- Parents sign a form which indicates the date treatment commenced and the name of treatment applied.
- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community around issues of head lice.
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective knowledge, understanding of and response to managing head lice.

**References:**

This School Policy draws on information obtained from:

- *Headlice Management Toolkit* published by DET  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/headlice/default.htm>
- Treating and controlling head lice pamphlet produced by the Victorian Government of Human Services, Public Health Group  
<http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Treating-and-controllingheadlice>
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm>

For further information please consult the websites:

- <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm>
- <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice>

**Evaluation:** -This Policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle or as needed.

<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Date Ratified</b>	June 2017
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Assistant Principal