



# HEADLICE

## POLICY

### RATIONALE

Head lice (pediculosis) are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They cannot transmit any infectious diseases. Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person, where head lice crawl from head to head. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Richmond Primary school community and to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our school also has a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents and students.

### AIMS

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their treatment.
- To minimise the incidents and spread of head lice.

### IMPLEMENTATION:

#### School Responsibilities

- 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 and staff attending the school
- Include information and updates in school newsletters
- Provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising and blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- Access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government

- Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge
- Only exclude children from school who are found with live head lice
- [Note: While head lice are not considered an agent for infectious disease, they are included on the school exclusion table.]
- At the conclusion of the school day, provide children with a note to take home to inform their parents or carers that they have head lice. Children may return to school after treatment has commenced.
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced
- Encourage children to learn about head lice, so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue
- Be aware of the real difficulties some parents and carers may encounter and seek extra support if required
- The school will develop a consent form for parents and guardians to sign at the commencement of children's schooling. This form will be kept on file for the duration of the children's time at Richmond Primary School and its purpose is to give consent for the school nurse to carry out head lice inspections when deemed necessary.
- Teachers or staff members suspecting that a child has head lice are to report their concerns to the First Aid officer.
- The First Aid officer will carry out head lice inspections only at the direction of the school Principal/ Assistant Principal and only to those students who have a signed consent form.
- The First Aid officer will notify parents if a child is suspected to have headlice and a note will be sent home to all students in the class.

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

- Regular inspections of their child/children's hair for lice/lice eggs (using conditioner and head lice comb is the most effective method)
- Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice
- Regular inspection of all household members followed by treatment if headlice is detected
- Upon detection of headlice notify the school so that the students' class can be notified
- Commence appropriate headlice treatment for head lice if they are detected
- ensure children with long hair attend school with their hair tied back
- Follow up treatment as advised by current literature and research (e.g. perform a second head lice treatment)

- Notify the parents and carers of their children's friends when their own children are found with head lice, so those families have an early opportunity to detect head lice and, if necessary, treat their children
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising and blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community, particularly around issues of head lice
- Parents can seek extra support if required from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice>

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's Strategic Planning and Review cycle and Ratified by School Council in 2019

**References:**

This policy draws on information obtained from Head Lice: Scratching for Answers?1 - the Victorian government's head lice website containing management guidelines and The Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide* – Head Lice page. 2019  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/headlice.aspx>

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