

HEAD LICE

Dear Parent/ Carer,

At any one time, most schools will have a few children with a range of childhood infections and a head lice infection is one of them.

The School will keep you informed should they be aware of any cases of head lice within your child's class. While lice are nothing more than a nuisance, it is important that children are checked on a weekly basis so that any head lice can be dealt with quickly and before they are allowed to spread too far. As there has been an outbreak, we suggest that you check your child's head as soon as possible.

Follow the simple CHECK, TREAT, COMPLETE routine below to ensure you are doing your bit to keep head lice outbreaks to a minimum.

CHECK

- Your child's hair once a week.
- Use a proper detection comb – with teeth no more than 0.3mm apart to trap head lice and white in colour so they can be easily seen.
- Make sure you have plenty of light – ideally natural daylight.
- If you find lice, consult a pharmacist for treatment advice, or use the “wet combing” method detailed below.
- If head lice are spotted, take a close look at all the family, including yourself and ask close family and friends to check as well.

TREAT

- Only treat if live lice are identified.
- If using a clinically proven treatment ensure that you leave the treatment on for the recommended time for maximum effect – leaving it on for longer will not make it more effective.
- Alternatively, use the “wet combing” method – Wash hair well with an ordinary shampoo and conditioner, towel dry until damp, not dripping. Remove any tangles with an ordinary comb. With the teeth of the detection comb touching the scalp at the top of the head, start combing towards the end of the hair, keeping the teeth of the comb in contact with the scalp as long as possible. Repeat the process moving round the whole of the head. It will take 10 – 15 minutes to do properly. Keep checking the comb, wiping it on a tissue can help identify any moving louse.

COMPLETE

- If the treatment you are using advises that a second application is to be applied seven days after the first application, please ensure that you do repeat it in order to kill any lice that may hatch from eggs during that time.
- Check that all head lice have gone within two or three days of the final application of head lice treatment to complete the process.
- If you are using the “wet combing” method, Hair should be combed every day with a detection comb for 14 days to remove resistant eggs and newly hatched lice.

Please note that head lice don't always cause an itchy scalp so many people will be unaware that they are infected. Some only develop an itchy scalp if they become sensitive to the louse saliva and this can take up to two months.

Common Myths

- *Head lice can only be passed by direct head-to-head contact. They cannot jump, fly, hop or swim.*
- *Head lice cannot be caught by sharing things like hairbrushes, towels or bedding. Head lice can only survive on heads, dying quickly once away from their food source. Adults and nymphs can only survive for 8 to 24 hours without feeding.*
- *Having head lice has nothing to do with personal hygiene or having dirty hair. They live on all types of hair and have no preference towards clean or dirty.*
- *Lice live incredibly close to the scalp and can survive on hair as short as 2mm long, so cutting or shaving hair will not necessarily help.*

Detection and effective treatment of any head lice outbreaks is the key to reducing the problem. Even if you do not find any live lice on this occasion, we would be grateful if you could inspect your child's hair at least once a week during regular hair washing.

Mr P. Walker
Headteacher