

HAIR HYGIENE POLICY

Policy Owner	Head of School / Medical Team
Approved by	Ms Sapna Changrani (Head of School)
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Circulation	Staff and Parents

1. INTRODUCTION

Head lice are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed. They move from one person to another by head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. They cannot jump to another person's head. Head lice lay eggs which hatch after 7–10 days. It takes about 10 days for a recently hatched louse to grow into an adult and start to lay eggs.

Nits are the empty white egg shells which are left when the lice hatch. Nits look like dandruff but stick strongly to hair. Unlike dandruff, you cannot easily brush out nits.

Children who get head lice may feel embarrassed or ashamed, but they shouldn't. Anyone can get head lice. It has nothing to do with being dirty or clean, and lice do not spread disease or illness.

2. PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

IMPORTANT

Mass screening of all pupils in a classroom and/or school does not control the spread of head lice. Rather, the spread of head lice can be minimized with routine inspection for live head lice and nits by all parents, and full treatment of those pupils with live head lice.

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Knowing head lice signs and symptoms.
- Routinely checking their child's head for head lice once a week.
- Telling their child's school, close friends, etc., that their child has head lice.
- Ensuring that full, proper treatment has been completed before the pupil returns to school.

3. ADVICE TO PARENTS

How to Find Head Lice (see Appendix 1)

- Severe itching is the most common sign of head lice.
- Look for head lice and tiny white or grey coloured eggs called nits. While nits might signal a live infestation, they don't necessarily mean live head lice are present, as the eggs may have already hatched.

- Check your own head and the heads of everyone who lives in the home.
- Advise the school that your child has head lice, and tell the parents of your child's friends to check their child for head lice.

How to Treat Head Lice (see Appendix 2)

- Information about special medicated treatments is available from the pharmacist or doctor.
- Only use medicated treatments on your child's head if you find live, moving head lice. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- Do not use medicated treatments if you just find eggs or nits.
- After treating your child's hair, make sure there are no live head lice. If you still find head lice that are moving, go back to the pharmacist or doctor for help.

After the First and Second Treatments

Parents should check the child's head to confirm the treatment was successful, continue checking every day for 10 days, and apply a second treatment 7 to 10 days after the first, since chemical treatments do not completely kill eggs. After the second treatment, parents should inspect the head every two days for 10 consecutive days before returning to weekly checks.

4. HOW TO PREVENT HEAD LICE

- Do not share personal items, such as combs, hats and scarves.
- Keep hats and scarves in a coat sleeve or pocket instead of in a spot with other hats and scarves.
- Tie long hair back.
- Check your child's head every week for head lice.

The School Will:

- Publish this policy on the school website and regularly remind parents to check their child's head.
- Promptly notify parents of active head lice infestations in their child's year group, referring parents to this policy on the website, with particular attention to the 'Head Lice Detection Map' (Appendix 1).

5. HEAD LICE AND ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Having head lice is not a reason for school absence, as treatment can be administered quickly. Should live head lice be noticed by a member of staff, a call will be made to the parent, who will be asked to collect the child from school immediately. A thorough comb-through or chemical treatment done quickly at home will enable the child to be back at school on the same day (unless parents are notified late in the afternoon).

Where treatment cannot be completed quickly, or where a parent prefers a precautionary approach, keeping the child at home for a short period (up to 3 days) while live lice are present remains an option available to parents.

If the infestation continues for more than three weeks, the Head of School will call the parents to discuss what is being done to eradicate the head lice and, if necessary, will make a referral to the school nurse.

6. APPENDIX 1 — HEAD LICE DETECTION MAP

i HEAD LICE DETECTION MAP

If your child has been in contact with a confirmed case of head lice, check your child's head for lice/nits every 2 days for 10 days.

Fast Facts About Head Lice

- Head lice have been a common problem for thousands of years.
- Head lice do not cause illness or disease.
- Head lice have 6 strong claws that hold tightly to a hair shaft.
- Head lice can only survive on human heads, not pets or other animals; they are not likely to survive off the head for more than 3 days.
- Head lice do not fly or jump — they crawl from one person to another by close head-to-head contact.
- Anyone can get head lice.

Visual

Sit your child under a bright light and look closely through the hair, especially behind the ears, the nape of the neck, and the crown of the head.

Comb Out

Part the hair into sections under bright light and comb through each section, inspecting for nits and live lice.

Conditioner Comb Through

Apply white conditioner to dry hair, comb through with an ordinary comb divided into sections, then use a lice comb on each section, wiping onto a white paper towel each time to check for lice and nits.

Finding	Recommended Action
No nits or live lice found.	Check your child's head once a week.
Nits found in your child's hair.	Check every 2 days for 10 days for live lice. Removing nits is at your discretion.
Live lice found in your child's hair.	Treat right away. Refer to 'Effective Treatment of Head Lice' (Appendix 2) and notify the school and the child's friends.

7. APPENDIX 2 — EFFECTIVE TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE

Finding	Recommended Action
Live, moving lice found.	Treatment required. Ask the pharmacist about the best recommended treatment and apply it following the instructions carefully.
Nits found in the hair.	Do not treat. Check every 2 days for 10 days. If live lice are found, treat. If not, return to weekly checking.
No nits or live lice found.	Do not treat. Check once a week.

8. REFERENCES

- CDC — Head Lice: Prevention and Control Guidance (cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/prevent.html)
- CDC — Head Lice: Guidance for Health Professionals (cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/health_professionals/index.html)

9. POLICY REVIEW

 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, to reflect operational needs, changes in legislation, or updated guidance from DHA