

Head Lice Procedures in a School Setting

The following guidelines will assist in the prevention and spread of head lice.

1. Instruction
 - a. Head lice education to students should be implemented yearly and include general head lice information and specific prevention measures.
 - b. There should be yearly inservice training for school staff to review control measures.
 - c. Parents and guardians should be:
 - (1) Informed of school policies regarding head lice management procedures at the beginning of the school year (especially at the elementary school level).
 - (2) Provided with access to information on appropriate management of head lice infestation.
 - (3) Reminded to wash clothes removed from the lost and found.
2. Screenings
 - a. Criteria for screening an individual for lice are: persistent itching or scratching, known exposure to sibling or other close contact with head lice (e.g., seat mate in classroom, locker mates, overnight sleep activities, scouts, etc.), staff member referral, or self (student or parent) referral.
 - b. Three non-related cases of head lice in a classroom within 10 consecutive school days requires that all children in the classroom be screened. Written notification will be sent home to parents/guardians of students in this classroom.
 - c. Periodic school screenings will be conducted on an “as needed” basis *(i.e., return from summer, winter, or spring breaks or when multiple cases have been identified).
 - d. An attempt to notify parents/guardians whenever individual or group screenings are planned or performed will be made.
3. Building Prevention
 - a. Carpeted areas of schools should be vacuumed daily and throw rugs discouraged. Kindergarten and primary classrooms are the highest priority.
 - b. When acquiring furniture for classrooms and the school office, furniture with cloth upholstery is discouraged.
 - c. Students should not pile jackets, scarves, or hats in the classroom, on the playground, or in the cafeteria.
 - d. Care should be taken when students hang up their coats each day. Coats should be hung on separate hooks, in plastic bags on hooks, on the back of chairs, or placed in a backpack.
 - e. Commercial insecticide sprays should never be used on furniture or mats. Vacuuming or washing with warm water and soap is sufficient and does not pose risks for students with respiratory ailments.
 - f. Health room mattresses should be cleaned regularly.

- g. Stereo or computer headsets should be wiped off with a clean cloth between student uses.
- h. Students should not share helmets. This may include sports teams and safety patrols.
- i. Students should avoid sharing hats, wigs, pillows, stuffed toys, or dress-up clothes. All these items should be washed in the event of a classroom outbreak whenever possible.

4. Students with Head Lice

Students with live lice should be immediately excluded from school. Although uncommon, transmission of live lice can occur between pupils at school. Parents/guardians may be advised to return to school with the student for re-admittance. It may be necessary to further exclude a student when they attempt to return to school if live lice remain present.

All checks for head lice should be done in a confidential manner to respect the student's right to privacy, and to the extent possible, to avoid embarrassment. All excluded students will be checked prior to re-admission to school.

The following statements are recommended guidelines for re-admission to school:

- a. Students found with live lice shall be excluded from school;
- b. Students who present with no live lice may return to school, even if nits are present;
- c. Students will be rechecked at 7 and 14 days. If live lice are present, the student will be excluded from school again;
- d. After 14 days if live lice remain present, absence of lice and nits is required for the student's re-admission to school;
- e. Students with nits only should not be excluded from school but rechecked in 7 and 14 days for the presence of live lice.

5. Designated School Staff

It is desirable to have a school nurse responsible for lice identification. In the school nurse's absence, school personnel shall be designated by the school nurse and building administrator.

Consistent and standardized instruction should be given to these designees with frequent updates and reviews to avoid inaccurate positive results and possible over treatment. Such instruction is available through Medford School District Nursing Services. Treatment strategies should be offered by school health professionals or trained office staff.