

## Head Lice Alert for Parents/Guardians

This is a reminder that head lice infestation typically is a community problem brought into the schools unintentionally by unsuspecting children. The peak time that children become infested with head lice is in the summer, because of sleep overs at camps, slumber parties, and vacationing, but lice are present in all communities year round. Because head lice are so small, the symptoms of itching may not develop for weeks or even months after infestation. Parents and children alike often do not even know there is a problem unless the parent inspects a child's head closely and often. Information on signs, symptoms, and things to do are provided on the back of this letter.

We encourage you to make "head checks" part of your weekly routine. If you see any lice or nits, please discuss the matter with your private health care provider.

Head lice are a nuisance, but they are treatable and are not life threatening. Your school nurse can help you with specific issues related to your child's attendance in school.

**Looking for signs and symptoms at home and notifying the school nurse is the best way to prevent and treat a head lice issue.**

For additional information please contact

School Nurse:		School:
Phone #:	Fax:	Email:

## **WHAT TO LOOK FOR AT HOME:**

- Adult head lice are tiny, wingless insects which are about the size of a sesame seed and live close to the scalp. They cannot jump or fly.
- They are usually light brown or grey, often blending in with your child's hair color.
- They move quickly and shy away from light, making them difficult to see.
- Their eggs, or nits, are smaller and silver, yellowish or white in color and attach to the hair shaft, close to the scalp.
- The nits resemble dandruff but, unlike dandruff, they are difficult to remove and will not wash off or blow away.
- Head lice should be suspected when there is intense itching, and head scratching especially at the nape of the neck and around the ears. The itching tends to become worse at night
- All household members and other close contacts should be checked, and those with evidence of an active infestation should also be treated at the same time.
- Hair should be treated with the shampoo or crème rinse recommended by your child's physician. There is no scientific evidence that home remedies are effective treatments.
- Begin removing the nits with a nit comb. ALL nits need to be removed to prevent re-infestation. Checking the hair and combing with a nit comb every 2-3 days for 2-3 weeks after treatment may also help prevent re-infestation.
- Family bed linens, clothing, hats and towels worn or used by the infested person in the 2 days prior to treatment should be washed in very hot water and dried on very hot air. Non-washable items may be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
- Personal articles such as combs, brushes and hair clips should also be washed in very hot water.
- Vacuum carpets, upholstery, pillows and mattresses which may have been used by a person with head lice.
- Notify close contacts so that they can monitor for lice as well.
- More resources can be found on the [CDC website](#).

## **RETURNING TO SCHOOL:**

- Your child may return to school after he or she is treated. Upon entering school the following day, your child will be checked in the nurse's office for any evidence of live lice. If live lice are present, they will be sent home for additional treatment. If no lice are detected, they will be sent to class.
- Remind your child not to share coats, hats, brushes or hair accessories.
- Children with long hair are advised to keep it pulled back tight in pony tails, braids, or buns to minimize exposure.