**HEAD LICE POLICY**

Pediculosis nor ‘head lice’ 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.

**Scope**

The following advice is provided to help prevent and control the transmission of head lice at Warrandyte primary School.

**Policy**

Primary resposibvilty for the control of infectious diseases, including head lice, lies with individuals, families and public health experts. While parents have the main responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools can assist with controlling and preventing the spread of head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Warrandyte primary School has an important role to play in supporting the control and prevention of head lice through:

* excluding infected students from school until the day after treatment has commenced.
* obtaining informed written consent of parents/carers prior to students being inspected for head lice.

**Control of head lice at Warrandyte Primary School**

The following outlines the actions Warrandyte Primary School will implement to control the transmission of head lice.

**Exclusion from school**

When a student is identified with live head lice (the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion) the school will:

* at the end of the day, provide the student with a note to take home to inform their parent/carer that their child may have head lice. The student can return to school once treatment has commenced.
* exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, School Exclusion Table.
* alert parents/carers of an infestation, particularly the parents/carers of other students in the same class as the affected chil/children
* use discetion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation.

**Visual head lice checks at Warrandyte Primary School**

* Visual checks only without physical contact, which do not require parent/guardian consent and are made by people authorised by the principal e.g classroom teachers
* Head lice inspections involving the physical examination of a student, will be made by people authorised by the principal/school council and require written parental consent.

Parent consent:

* Will be obtained prior to commencing any physical examination of a student
* Will be provided to parents/carers for completion at the commencement of each year
* Will be updated when guardianship or custody arrangemnts change for the student
* Will be updated if parents/carers no longer wish to consent to inspections

**Prevention of head lice**

Although the responsibility for detecting and treating head lice rests with parents/carers, it is important that practical advice and support be available.

Warrandyte Primary School will work collaboratively with parents and the broader school community to implement practices and procedures to prevent and minimise the impact of head lice outbreaks.

The table below shows strategies Warrandyte Primary School can implement to prevent the transmission of head lice.

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| --- | --- |
| **Strategy** | **Details** |
| Leadership and commitment | Take a whole school approach to prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the department of Health and human Services.  Ensure the whole school community is awre of and understands this policy. |
| Helthy physical environment | Head lice do not live or breed on furniture, carpets, clothes or soft toys and cannot be spread through sharing items of clothing e.g.hats.  Encourage parents to ties their child’s hair back if it is long.  Implement learning activities that minimise head-to-head contact during head lice outbreaks. |
| Healthy culture | Exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality and help reduce stigma (e.g. provide a letter to all students involved in inspections, not just those found to have head lice).  Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice. |
| Student teaching and learning | Incorporate learning activities focused on prevention of head lice into the curriculum.  Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue. |
| Supported staff and educators | Consider families, students and staff as key partners in developing and supporting head lice prevention initiatives.  Provide general information regarding head lice in the school newsletter, on Compass or on the school website for parent reference. |
| Community partnerships | Work with local health professionals, services and other organisations to increase their capacity to deliver and promote head lice prevention initiatives.  Access community educational resources and support such as community health centres or local government. |

**Parent/carer detection and treatment responsibilities**

Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice. Responsibilities include:

* Not sending their children to school with untreated head lice
* Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child’s health at risk
* Regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members
* Notifying the school – if their child is affected and when treatment commenced.

**RELATED LEGISLATION and resources**

* Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001
* Department of health and Human Services: *Scratching for Answers*
* Better Health Channel: *Head Lice(nits)*

**Review cycle**

**This policy is a Department Policy and was last updated on 8/5/19.**