

# HEADLICE



# Policy

Ratified School Council 2011

### **RATIONALE:**

Most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our school community will work in a cooperative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time\*. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be eradicated.

### **AIM:**

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

- The school will coordinate the program.

#### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method;
- Children do not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001);
- Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary;
- Will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001);
- Will ensure that children with long hair has it tied back appropriately;
- Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice;
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

**To support parents/carers and the boarder school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:**

- Make available and distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff eg. Newsletter items;
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government;
- Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge, and
- Only exclude children from school with live insects;
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced;
- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue;
- Familiarise families with this policy;
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of Head Lice;
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice;
- Ensure that persons employed by the school, or volunteering, to undertake 'head lice inspections' will adhere to the school policy and latest Department of Human Services information and Health (infectious Diseases Regulations 2001);
- Only inspect the heads of children whose parents have given prior consent;
- Develop a generic/blanket consent form which parents sign (*Attachment 1*);
- Respect the wishes of parents/families who elect not to participate in school head lice check;
- Include teachers and school staff in inspections if they so wish;
- Employ / arrange for suitably qualified persons trained in the detection of head lice to perform inspections;

- Contact the parent/carer when lice are detected, and exclude the child from school until treatment has been completed and a Head Lice Treatment Form has been signed and returned by the parent/carer (*Attachment 2*). The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion. Parents need to be aware that one treatment may not be sufficient to manage the problem. If a child re-attends school with live lice the school will again exclude the child until the live insects have been removed.
- When a staff member suspects the presence of head lice, and if the child is included in the program, inspect the child. In situations where the child is not included in the program the parent is contacted and informed of the possible presence of head lice. (In obvious cases the parent is notified and child excluded from school).

**EVALUATION:** This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's policy review cycle.

Attachment 1

**CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT HEAD LICE INSPECTIONS**

**Permission to cover the duration of the student's schooling at:**

**Skye Primary School**

Throughout your child's schooling, the school will be arranging head lice inspections of students.

The management of head lice infection works best when all children are involved in our screening program.

The school is aware that this can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining student confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation.

The inspections of students will be conducted by a trained person approved by the principal and school council.

Before any inspections are conducted the person conducting the inspections will explain to all students what is being done and why and it will be emphasised to students that the presence of head lice in their hair does not mean that their hair is less clean or well kept than anyone else's. It will also be pointed out that head lice can be itchy and annoying and if you know you have got them, you can do something about it.

The person conducting the inspections will check through each student's hair to see if any lice or eggs are present.

Person's authorised by the school principal may also visually check your child's hair for the presence of head lice, when it is suspected that head lice may be present. They do not physically touch the child's head during a visual check.

In cases where head lice are found, the person inspecting the student will inform the student's teacher and the principal . The school will make appropriate contact with the parents/guardians/carers.

Please note that health regulations requires that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until appropriate treatment has commenced. The school may request the completion of an 'action taken form', which requires parents/guardians/carers to nominate if and when the treatment has started.

Parent's/guardian's/carer's full name: .....

Parent's/guardian's/carer's full name: .....

Address:..... Post code:.....

Name of child attending the school:.....

I hereby give my consent for the above named child to participate in the school's head lice inspection program for the duration of their schooling at this school.

**Signature of parent/guardian/carer: ..... Date.....**

**Signature of parent/guardian/carer: ..... Date.....**

*Please inform the school if guardianship/custody changes for your child, as this form will need to be re-signed to reflect these changes. Please also inform the school in writing if you no longer wish to provide consent for the school to undertake head lice inspections for your child.*

**SKYE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ballarto Road, Skye 3977  
(No. 1222)

Telephone: 97861555

Facsimile: 97776 8400

Email: [skye.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:skye.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Attachment 2

**PARENT NOTIFICATION**

Child's Name:..... Grade:.....

Today your child was screened by the Head Lice nurse and was found to have the following:

- Live lice
- Dead lice
- Louse eggs
- No evidence of lice or eggs found

Under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, children can be excluded from school if found to have lice or eggs.

Please return the slip below when your child returns to school informing the principal when treatment has occurred.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Thank you for partaking in this community approach to head lice control.

CHRIS SHORT  
PRINCIPAL

✂-----

**SKYE PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**NOTIFICATION OF TREATMENT**

Child's Name:..... Grade:.....

My child was screened on:..... and was found to have lice and /or eggs.

I have treated my child with ..... and they will be returning to school today.

.....  
Parents Name (Please Print)

.....  
(Parent Signature)

.....  
Date