

Skye Primary School  
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# HEAD LICE



# POLICY



## POLICY

Schools have 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

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

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following outlines the actions schools are required to implement to control the transmission of head lice.

### Exclusions from school

Exclusion under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 refers to exclusion of children from school or children's services centres until the day after appropriate treatment has started. In the case of head lice, appropriate treatment refers to treatment that removes live lice. For instance, the use of combing and conditioner can constitute appropriate treatment. If a child re-attends school with live lice they can again be excluded until the live insects have been removed.

**Note 1:** Principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school

**Note 2:** The presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice)

**Note 3:** There is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for the child to return to school

Principals must:

- alert parents/carers of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the infected child/children
- use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation

please note at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools, it is not necessary to inform the whole school community of each head lice case detected.

### Visual head lice checks in schools

There is no requirement for schools to undertake head lice inspection programs. However if schools wish to do so, they can conduct checks via:

visual check (without physical contact)

- do not require parent/guardian consent
- are made by people authorised by the principal e.g. classroom teacher/school nurse

head lice inspections involving the physical examination of a student:

- are made by people authorised by the principal council e.g. teacher/school nurse
- require written parental consent, usually obtained at enrolment

Parent consent:

- should be provided to parents/carers for completion as part of enrolment
- must be updated when guardianship or custody arrangements change for the student
- must be updated parents/carers no longer wish to consent to inspections

## **PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT**

Skye Primary School have a commitment to distribute up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians and staff at the beginning of every year and more frequently if required.

### **Role of the Parent/carer**

Parental and carer responsibilities include:

- ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice
- the use of safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk. Unsafe practices include: treating hair with a product that contains an insecticide more often than once per week or using it as a preventative measure; using pet flea or tick treatments; fly spray or insecticidal surface sprays and dangerous products such as kerosene
- Parents are encouraged to tie their child's hair back if long

To achieve this, it is reasonable to expect parent and carers will:

- regularly (preferably once a week) inspect their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the easiest and most effective way to do this – see the department's pamphlet)
- regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary
- notify the parents or carers of their child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

### **Role of our school**

Providing support for parents through:

- taking a whole school approach in the prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the department of health and human services
- practical advice and a sympathetic attitude so as to avoid stigmatising families who are experiencing difficulty with the control measures

- encouraging parents to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child for head lice. Older children could be taught to use conditioner to check their own hair (See the resources section of [www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice)).
- accessing community educational resources and support such as school nursing, community health centres or local government
- being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from a school or children's service centre rests with the principal or person in charge of the school
- being aware that the exclusion of children, from a school or children's services centre, with head lice refers only to those children who have live insects and does not refer to head lice eggs
- educating all the staff at the school or centre about head lice
- encouraging children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue (See the resources section of [www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice))

### **Role of local government:**

The responsibilities of the staff in local government include:

- providing accurate information regarding the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 to all stakeholders including schools, hairdressers, childcare centres and the general public
- disseminating up to date and accurate information provided by the department
- support and remain consistent with the department's policy on the management and treatment of head lice
- state the councils policy regarding head lice in either the council's policy documents or the municipal public health plan
- liaise with other resource people within the municipality
- be aware the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 do not require a person with head lice to obtain a clearance certificate prior to returning to school or work

### References and Acknowledgments

[www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au) – policy advisory guide

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) - Department of Health

**Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019**

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>

### **Related Policies**

First Aid Policy

Administration of Medication Policy

Student Health and Wellbeing Policy

Infectious Diseases Policy