





Head Lice (Pediculosis) Management Policy

	Ratified by Council	Reviewed by Principal
Date	17 April 2021	17 April 2021
Name	Justin Coombs	Jenny Dougan
Signature		

West Coast Steiner School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation, taking a preventative and participatory stance on child protection issues and promoting a child safe environment.

PROVENANCE					
Review Cycle	3 years	Last Review	April 2021	Next Review	April 2024
Responsibility	School Principal				
Related Policies and Procedures	Student Health Care Policy				
Relevant Legislation and Authority	School Education Act 1999				
Appendix	WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet Head Lice Notification Letter				

VERSION MANAGEMENT		
Date	Changes Made	Author
April 2021	Updated and reformatted	L Lane

Policy

Background

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the human head, feeding on the scalp several times a day. They reproduce by laying eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. Although head lice are not considered a health hazard, do not carry disease and are not a sign of poor hygiene, infestations can be a cause of anxiety and frustration for families, educators and children.

Whilst families have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, West Coast Steiner School will work in a co-operative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively. The School follows the current recommendations for managing head lice outlined by the Department of Health (Communicable Disease Guidelines 2017 Edition).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to outline the shared responsibility and procedures West Coast Steiner School has set in place to identify and manage head lice.

Application

This policy applies to and is binding upon all students, parents, staff and community members of West Coast Steiner School. For the purpose of this policy and related procedures, 'parent/s' includes legal guardians, step-parents, foster parents and carers.

Policy Review and Dissemination

This policy and related procedures will be made available to the public and staff members on the School website and is available to staff in the Policies and Procedures folder in the School Office.

The School may, at any time, make amendments to this policy to ensure continuous improvement. The policy will be reviewed at least once every three years by the School Principal

Procedures

West Coast Steiner School will provide information, advice and education to parents and the School Community about head lice management and encourage students to learn about head lice so as to help them understand the issue and reduce anxiety. Parents who need further advice or who experience difficulty with treatment will be referred to the Community Nurse for assistance.

Under the School Education Act 1999, students found to have head lice may be excluded from School at the discretion of the Principal until effective treatment has begun. Students can return to School the morning after treatment has commenced, provided that effective treatment is completed consistently over the following 10 days.

Under Part 3, Division 2, r29 of the Education Regulations 2000, Head Lice Inspections, the Principal may authorise a member of the teaching staff or another officer at School to examine the head of any student for the purpose of ascertaining whether head lice are present.

Action by School

When a student is suspected to have head lice at School, i.e. where eggs (nits) or crawling insects are seen or where a child is scratching their head excessively, a staff member may examine the individual student's hair, being cognisant that a 'dry' head check may be unreliable.

If the student is found to have head lice, the School Reception will;

- contact the student's parents and ask for the child to be taken home to commence treatment before returning to School
- provide the student's parents with a copy of the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet (Appendix 1) as they collect the student from the School Reception
- email Notification of Head Lice letter (Appendix 2) to parents of the other students in the child's class, advising that head lice is present and asking that they also check their child's hair using the hair conditioner method described in the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet (Appendix 1 sent as an attachment).

If no signs of infestation are seen on inspection, the School Reception will still inform the parents of the student and ask them to check using the hair conditioner method described in the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet.

Action by Parents

Dealing with head lice and breaking the cycle of infestation can be a frustrating process for many families. Parents are encouraged to check their children's hair often and to use safe and recommended practices to treat head lice. It is important to maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

To assist with the management of head lice, parents will:

- regularly check their child's hair for head lice infestation
- if notified of a head lice infestation in the student's class, use the conditioner/combing detection method recommended in the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet
- ensure children with shoulder length hair are sent to School with their hair tied back.

If the child is found to have head lice, parents will:

- treat the child's head immediately using the advice in the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet and continue treatment over the following 10 days to ensure that all eggs and hatchlings have been removed
- inform the School Reception if their child has head lice, confirm that treatment has commenced and ensure their child does not attend School with untreated head lice
- check the rest of the family for head lice infestation
- advise close contacts and parents or guardians of their child's friends so they have an early opportunity to check for head lice and treat if necessary.

Appendix 1: Head Lice Fact Sheet

Complete document <Q:\Administration\Medical\Head Lice>



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health
Public Health

Head lice

What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the human head, feeding on the scalp several times a day. Head lice reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. They are not dangerous, don't carry diseases and are not a sign of poor hygiene.

How are head lice spread?

Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice, e.g. when doing group work at school, playing, or hugging. Head lice can run from one head to another in seconds. Head lice cannot fly, jump or swim, but they can sometimes 'trapeze' from one hair to another. Brushes and combs are unlikely to transfer head lice and do not transfer viable eggs, as these are very hard to detach from the hair shaft. Head lice are not spread through bed linen, clothing or head gear, as they do not leave the scalp unless they are dead or dying. Eggs ('nits') do not fall off until weeks after they have hatched as the egg shells are glued tightly to the hair shaft.

What are the signs of head lice?

The scalp may itch as the skin reacts to the saliva of the head lice. Itchiness can take weeks to develop. If you have had head lice more than once, the skin may become desensitised and there may be little or no itch. Crawling head lice may be seen in the hair, but they can move at 30 cm per minute and can be difficult to spot. Head lice can quickly run and hide from searching hands. Adult lice are usually dark brown and about 2 to 3 mm long. Hatchlings (young lice) are often a lighter brown and about 1 to 2 mm long. Eggs (nits) may be seen attached to

the hair shaft but they may be very tiny and hard to see, especially newly-laid eggs close to the scalp. They are grey-white and about the size of a grain of salt.

How do I look for head lice?

Unless numerous head lice are visible, 'dry', head checks are unreliable, due to the speed at which head lice can move. To check hair for head lice, carefully comb plenty of hair conditioner through the dry hair, then comb again in sections with a metal fine-tooth 'nit' comb. The hair conditioner slows the head lice down so that the lice can be trapped in the comb (see page 3). Wipe the combings on a white paper towel and examine them with a magnifying glass in strong light, e.g. sunlight, to look for head lice and eggs. To check more effectively for eggs, use a magnifying glass in strong light, e.g. sunlight, to examine the hair close to the scalp, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.

What other things can be mistaken for head lice?

Other objects in the hair can be mistaken for head lice or eggs. These include sand, dandruff, flakes of hair spray, ants, aphids, or other small insects.

What do I do if I find head lice?

- Check all household members to see if anyone else has head lice – use the hair conditioner method described on page 3. Only continue with the 10 day treatment if you find head lice and/or eggs.
- Choose one of the treatments described on page 3 and 4, and follow the instructions carefully.



Appendix 2: Head Lice Notification

Complete document <Q:\Administration\Medical\Head Lice>



10/06/2021

Dear Parents

Head Lice Notification

It has been brought to our attention that Head Lice have been found in your child's class. Please check your child's hair and scalp today using the conditioner/combing detection method outlined in the attached WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet.

If lice or nits (eggs) are present, please be sure to treat your child's head immediately using the advice in the WA Department of Health Head Lice Fact Sheet and continue treatment over the following 10 days to ensure that all eggs and hatchlings have been removed.

Please note that your child may attend class again one day after the commencement of treatment.

We thank you for your support and understanding.

Kind regards

Jenny Dougan

Principal