



Heidelberg Primary School

HEAD LICE POLICY

THIS IS THE POLICY OF THE VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Heidelberg Primary School on 94572259.

Policy

This policy sets out the requirements for schools to prevent and control the transmission of head lice.

Summary

- Primary responsibility for the control of head lice lies with individuals, families and public health experts. However, schools can assist with controlling and preventing head lice.
- When a student is identified with live head lice, schools must provide the student with a [note to take home \(DOCX\)](#) to inform their parent/carer that their child has head lice and exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced.
- Principals must [alert parents or carers of an infestation \(DOCX\)](#) and use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community.
- Schools are not required to conduct visual head lice checks but in the event that they decide to, parental consent is required if the student is physically examined.

Details

Control of head lice in schools

Schools control the spread of head lice in 2 ways:

1. exclusion from school
2. visual head lice checks in schools

Exclusion from school

When a student is identified with live head lice schools must:

- at the end of the school day, provide the student with a [note to takehome](#) to inform their parent/carer that their child may have head lice
- exclude the student from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, school exclusion table – refer to the health.vic website: [School exclusion table](#).

Note 1: the 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 or carers of an infestation \(DOCX\)](#), particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child or children
- use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation.

Note: the Department of Health indicates there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools at any given time, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are 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 checks only without physical contact which:

- do not require parent or carer consent
- are made by people authorised by the principal, for example, classroom teachers.

Head lice inspections involving the physical examination of a student:

- are made by people authorised by the principal for example, teacher
- require [written parental consent \(DOCX\)](#), usually obtained at enrolment.

Parent or carer consent:

- should be obtained prior to commencing any physical examination of a student
- 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 if parents/carers no longer wish to consent to inspections.

Prevention of head lice in schools

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

Schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with parents and the broader school community to implement practices and procedures to prevent and minimise the impact of head lice outbreaks.

Strategies that schools can implement to prevent the transmission of head lice are listed below.

Leadership and commitment

It is considered best practice to:

- take a whole school approach to prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the Department of Health, refer to the [Resources tab](#)
- ensure the whole school community is aware of and understands this policy.

Healthy 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, for example, hats.

However, it is best practice for schools to:

- encourage parents to tie their child's hair back if it is long
- implement learning activities that minimise head-to-head contact during head lice outbreaks.

Healthy culture

Schools must:

- exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality and help reduce stigma (for example, 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

Schools could:

- 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.

Support staff and educators

It is best practice to:

- consider families, students and staff as key partners in developing and supporting lice prevention initiatives
- provide general information regarding head lice in the school prospectus, school newsletter or on the school website for parent reference.

Community partnerships

Schools can:

- 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 or 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.

Definitions

Head lice

Pediculosis or '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.

Related policies

- [Infectious Diseases](#)

Relevant legislation

- [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 \(Vic\)](#)

COMMUNICATION

This policy was last made available to all staff via the Daily Organisation 15 November 2023.



Heidelberg Primary School

HEAD LICE ACTION PLAN

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Head lice or eggs are suspected to have been detected on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please see the attached pamphlet, *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

It is very important for you to notify Heidelberg Primary School and to advise when appropriate treatment has commenced.

It is important to note that health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note that this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

Please complete the below form and provide this to your child's class teacher on the return of your child to school.



.....

**Action Taken – Student Head Lice
Parent/Guardian/Carer Response Form**

To: **CONFIDENTIAL**

Student's Full Name: _____

Year Level: _____

I understand that my child should not attend school with untreated head lice.

I used the following recommended treatment for head lice or eggs for my child

Name : _____

Treatment commenced on (insert date) ___/___/___

Signature of parent/carer/guardian:

Date.....