

## HEAD LICE INFORMATION & POLICY



### HEAD LICE

Head lice have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice and given the chance head lice move from head to head without discrimination. Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. People get head lice from direct hair to hair contact with another person who has head lice. Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

### Finding Head Lice

Lice can crawl and hide. The easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps:

Step 1 - Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.

Step 2 - Comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth, head lice comb.

Step 3 - Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

Step 4 - Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

Step 5 -Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4 or 5 times

If lice or eggs are found, the child's hair should be treated. Head lice eggs are small (the size of a pinhead) and oval. A live egg will 'pop' when squashed between fingernails.

### Treating Head Lice

Concentrate on the head - there is no evidence to suggest that you need to clean the house or classroom.

No treatment kills all of the eggs so treatment must involve two applications seven days apart.

If you are using lotions, apply the product to dry hair.

There is no need to treat the whole family, unless they also have head lice.

Only the pillowcase requires specific laundering; either wash it in hot water (at least 60 degrees centigrade) or dry it using a clothes dryer on the hot or warm setting.

There is no product available that prevents head lice. Using the conditioner and comb method once a week will help you detect any head lice early and minimise the problem. Tying back long hair can help prevent the spread of head lice.

Combs with long, rounded stainless steel teeth positioned very close together have been shown to be the most effective; however, any head lice comb can be used.

### Our School Head Lice Procedure

We do not inspect children's heads for head lice however if we suspect your child has head lice you will be contacted by the school. It is an expectation to help us and other students / families that you will treat your child appropriately and diligently prior to returning them to school. Likewise if there is a case of head lice reported to the school all children in that grade will be notified via a note so that parents can step up their head lice inspection of their child at home. It is not the school's fault that your child has head lice! It is your responsibility to inspect your child's head on a regular basis to detect any infestation early and then to use an appropriate treatment. For more information please check out the website: [www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice).

If all parents have a diligent approach to the detection and treatment of head lice we will have more chance of reducing the spread of the infestation.

Nicky Fammartino  
Principal