

April 3, 2013

Mr. Foote,

The Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) met April 1, 2013. Committee members were educated on the 2013 changes to the Department of State Health Services Texas Administrative Code by Joann Eudy from Region 16 Service Center. The discussion included notifiable conditions and school exclusion criteria. The Department of State Health Services is no longer recommending exclusion requirements for head lice. The Head lice web cast presentation by Anita Wheeler, Child Wellness/School program describes head lice as a "nuisance" and explains head lice is difficult to contract at school. The DSHS states that children are missing valuable classroom instruction time as a result of exclusion. They further state that exclusion is impacting learning and possibly academic credit. Changes in the law are supported by evidence based practice recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and National Association of School Nurses position stating that no child be excluded from school for head lice. DSHS stressed that the focus should be on parent/staff education, avoidance of prolonged head to head contact and environmental changes at school. It has been documented that by the time a child is identified with head lice he or she has been infested for several weeks. DSHS strongly encourages each school district to develop their head lice policies after seeking legal counsel, Texas Association of School Boards and Texas Education Agency for guidance.

SHAC members voiced many concerns about the spread of head lice, parent/staff responses, absenteeism, financial cost as well as exclusion decisions. It is the committee's recommendation that the following changes be considered when the district develops a new head lice policy.

- 1) Seek legal advice when developing a new policy as well as utilizing TASB/School Model Handbook and TEA recommendations.
- 2) Discontinue the practice of universal head checks on students.
- 3) Discontinue DISD'S "No Nit" policy thus allowing students to return to school with nits.
- 4) Continue excluding students with live lice.
- 5) Insure that students are found to be lice free before reentering school.
- 6) Update the student handbook with the new policy.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide head lice policy recommendations as well as the opportunity to serve the students of the Dalhart Independent School District.

DISD Student Health Advisory Committee