

**POLICY TITLE: HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)**

Head lice are a common problem among school-aged children and adolescents. The Agency shall take appropriate steps to assist parents/guardians in preventing and addressing head lice while respecting the confidentiality of students with head lice and limiting disruption to their education. Head lice live only on humans and are spread from person to person regardless of good health habits. They spread by sharing combs and brushes, hats, or other objects placed on or in the hair. They can also be spread through close physical contact. The adult female attaches 6-10 tiny eggs (nits) per day to the hair shaft. In 10-12 days, if left on the human host, the eggs will hatch. Head lice cannot survive without its human host for more than 24 hours. The life span of the adult is 23-30 days.

Lice prevention and management activities shall be under the direction of the building principal. The building principal shall conduct the following tasks and/or train and designate other staff members to do the follow:

1. Provide general information to parents/guardians on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of head lice.
2. Encourage parents/guardians to perform regular lice checks on the scalp of their children who attend school, especially when excessive itching is noticed;
3. Conduct checks for head lice in students showing symptoms of head lice; and
4. Notify a student's parent/guardian if they are found to have head lice and provide resources on appropriate treatment options.

Individuals shall be trained and assigned within each school to assist in implementing this policy.

To prevent the spread of head lice at school, students should avoid head-to-head and hair-to-hair contact during activities. Students shall be discouraged from sharing such items as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair accessories, combs, brushes, or towels.

**Checking for Head Lice**

As described in Policy 3500, parents/guardians shall be informed that the school may conduct head lice checks as described below and shall be given the opportunity to consent to such checks ahead of time or decline to do so.

If a parent/guardian declines to consent to a head lice check for their child, the staff member who would have conducted such a check shall document that they requested consent for such a check and that the parent/guardian declined to provide it.

Any staff member who suspects a student has head lice shall report this to the building principal or their designee. The building principal or their designee may train school staff on recognizing signs of head lice.

If the student's parent has consented to such a check, the student will be checked for head lice in a confidential manner by trained personnel. Students who attend school in the Agency and are likely to have had head-to-head or other close personal contact with the student, such as siblings, may also be checked.

The Agency shall not conduct mass lice screenings of students not showing symptoms of head lice.

### Students Found to Have Head Lice

Cases of head lice should be managed in ways that reduce disruption to the education process.

In addition to ensuring the Agency has parent/guardian consent prior to checking a student for head lice, the building principal or designated staff will immediately notify the student's parents/guardians before they have been checked for head lice.

The parent/guardian shall be notified of whether lice or nits were found. If signs of lice warranting treatment are found, the parent/guardian will be requested to begin treatment immediately. The notice shall state that prompt, proper treatment of the head lice is in the best interest of the student and their classmates.

Parents/guardians shall be provided with information on head lice treatment consistent with the recommendations of the medical professional consulted by the Agency. The information should include details explaining the problem, list the procedures for treatment, and explain any requirements for reentering school. In addition, the medical professional consulted by the Agency may offer extra help or information to families of children who are repeatedly or chronically found to have head lice.

Students who are found to have lice will be discouraged from making head-to-head contact with others and sharing personal items with other students. Students will not generally be sent home from school early due to signs of live or dead lice or nits. Exceptions may be made as determined appropriate and necessary by the building principal.

If a student is suspected of having head lice but their parent/guardian does not consent to a check for head lice, the parent/guardian shall be notified that the school suspects the student has head lice. The parent may also be provided with information on head lice treatment and with assistance similar to that provided to parents of students found to have head lice.

## Return to School

The student may return to school once the parent/guardian affirms they have begun an appropriate course of treatment for the student's head lice. Students will not generally be excluded from school for having live head lice, provided treatment has begun. Exceptions may be made as determined appropriate and necessary by the building principal or designated staff.

## Notification of Head Lice Cases at School

The Agency will not normally send a notification regarding head lice cases in the school to parents/guardians of students, aside from notifications related to checks of their own child for head.

## Review of Policy

The Superintendent shall review the lice management program and related procedures periodically, in consultation with medical experts as appropriate, to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the students, their families, and the Agency and to ensure they are in compliance with current best practices.

Any records created related to head lice cases should be maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and Agency policies regarding the maintenance and confidentiality of student records. Only information needed for purposes of assuring notification of the appropriate parties involved and for prevention of further exposures should be noted in a student's school records. Whether any student has or is suspected of having head lice shall be kept confidential.

### **Legal References**

IC § 33-512

### **Description**

District Trustees - Governance of Schools

### **Other References**

American Academy of Pediatrics

### **Description**

Head Lice, Clinical Reports: Guidance for the Clinician in Rendering Pediatric Care by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022

American Academy of Pediatrics

Controlling Head Lice & Reducing Stigma by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Head Lice Information for Schools by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015

National Association of School Nurses

Head Lice Management in Schools: Position Statement by the National Association of School Nurses, 2020

**Cross References**

**Code**

3500

**Description**

Student Health/Physical Screenings/Examinations

3520

Contagious or Infectious Diseases

**POLICY HISTORY:**

**Adopted: Originally adopted 3-19-18 as Policy 421**

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