



# HEADLICE POLICY

## **PURPOSE**

To minimise outbreaks of head lice.

## **POLICY**

Schools must:

- Obtain informed written consent of parents/guardians prior to students being inspected for head lice.
- Exclude infected students until the day after treatment has commenced.

## **TOOLKIT**

The Headlice Management Toolkit supports the development of school policy and contains the circulars below:

- 010/2003 Head Lice, providing possible content for the school policy
- 017/2005 Head Lice Management, providing a pro forma consent form for parents/guardians to consent to head lice inspections.

See: [Department resources](#)

### **Parent/guardian consent**

A pro forma consent form:

- obtains parent/guardian consent to head lice inspections
- should be provided to parents for completion as part of enrolment
- must be updated when:
  - guardianship or custody arrangements change for the student
  - parents/guardians no longer wish to consent to inspections
- applies for the duration the child is at the school.

### **VISUAL HEADLICE CHECKS**

Head lice have been found in most schools, Checks for head lice occur via:

- visual checks without physical contact:
  - do not require parent/guardian consent
  - are made by people authorised by the principal, e.g. classroom teachers.
- head lice inspections involving the examination of a student:
  - require written parental consent, usually obtained at enrolment
  - are made by people authorised by the principal and school council e.g. school nurse or parent volunteer.

## **VISUAL HEADLICE CHECKS**

Students identified with live head lice should be:

- provided with a note to take home to inform the parent/carer that their child may have head lice at the conclusion of the school day.
- excluded from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table.

**Note 1:** 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. 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.

## **Detection and treatment responsibilities**

Responsibilities for managing head lice are shared between: parents/guardians, schools and principals.

Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for detection and treatment of head lice. Parents/guardians should:

- regularly, preferably once a week, check for lice or eggs in the hair of:
  - their child
  - all household members
- notify the school:
  - if their child is affected
  - when treatment commenced
- not send their children to school with untreated head lice.

Schools must:

- exercise sensitivity towards students and families with head lice
- maintain student confidentiality to avoid stigmatisation
- support and provide practical treatment advice to parents/guardians.

Principals must:

- alert parents/guardians of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child/children
- use discretion about informing the school community about an infestation.

**Note:** The Department of Human Services indicates at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

## **Related policies**

- [Infectious Diseases](#)

## **Related legislation**

- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001

**Department resources**

- [Headlice Management ToolKit](#)

**Other resources**

- For more information about head lice recognition and treatment see: Department of Health and Human Services: [Scratching for Answers](#)

**Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

**Certification**

- This policy was endorsed by School Council at the meeting held on ..../..../.....
- This policy was endorsed by ..... committee at the meeting held on ..../..../.....

**Signed**.....

**Signed**.....

**Principal**

**School Council President**