



HEAD LICE POLICY

1. RATIONALE

St Hilda's has developed the following head lice policy in consultation with staff, parents and the Department of Health. The aim of this Policy is to ensure a consistent, coordinated and cooperative approach to managing head lice in the School community.

2. SCOPE

Compliance with the Policy helps the whole school community to keep head lice infestation under control and so minimise inconvenience, expense and distress for parents and students.

3. BACKGROUND

For further information about head lice, click [here](#).

4. DEFINITIONS

Head lice are tiny wingless insects about the size of a sesame seed that live in the hair of humans and animals where they feed on blood by biting the skin. Lice are not dangerous, and do not spread disease.

Head lice are tiny insects that feed on blood from the human scalp. An infestation of head lice, called pediculosis capitis, most often affects children and usually results from the direct transfer of lice from the hair of one person to the hair of another.

A head lice infestation isn't a sign of poor personal hygiene or an unclean living environment. Head lice, don't carry bacterial or viral infectious diseases but their bites can cause itching (in 50% of those infected) and sometimes skin irritation. It is a communicable disease.

5. LEGISLATION

Nil

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Wellness Centre Staff Guidelines – Junior School

7. GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

7.1 The Parents' responsibilities:

- to learn about head lice infestation and management by [reading](#) the fact sheet
- to regularly check their child's hair for head lice infestation or if notified of a head lice infestation in the student's class, to treat their child's hair immediately if the child has head lice, using the advice in the fact sheet
- to inform the School and other close contacts if their child has a head lice infestation, and to confirm that treatment of their child's hair has commenced
- to be aware of and follow the School's head lice management policy.

7.2 The School Nurse's responsibility:

- to provide information, advice and education to parents and the School community about head lice management
- to provide additional advice for families experiencing persistent head lice infestation.

7.3 The School's responsibility:

- to develop, implement and maintain a head lice management policy
- to ensure that parents and staff are aware of the School's head lice policy, and that parents are provided with a copy of the Department of Health's head lice fact sheet on request.

7.4 How Head Lice Information Is Disseminated

The School takes the following steps to ensure that accurate up-to-date head lice treatment advice is provided to the School community:

7.4.1 The Department of Health's [Head Lice Fact Sheet](#):

- is available in the Junior School Reception
- is emailed home to the parents of a child with head lice, and an App notice is sent to parents of the other children in the same class, accompanied by the fact sheet

7.5 Class Head Lice Education

Head lice information is included in class activities where appropriate, for example:

- Personal Development – how to identify head lice and comb them out
- Science - life cycle of the head louse

7.6 What Happens When A Child Is Found To Have Head Lice?

The School undertakes the following steps to ensure that a clearly defined process is followed when a child is found to have head lice:

7.6.1

- The student is given a brief, age-appropriate explanation about the head lice and parents contacted. Parents are informed that their child has head lice and advises them that, as required by the School Education Act 1999, the child must commence head lice treatment before returning to school. A copy of the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet is provided.
- Parents of the other students in the class are sent an App notification on the same day, asking them to check their child's hair for head lice and advising them how to do this more effectively, using the Department of Health recommended hair conditioner method.

7.6.2

- Once treatment has commenced, the parents of the child with head lice should send the child back to School.
- For persistent infestations parents are reminded of their responsibility to the child and to the school community. The parents are advised that the child must not return to school until treatment has begun.

7.7 Additional Key Points

7.7.1 Hairstyles

- Students with shoulder length hair or longer must wear it tied back, braided and/or pinned

7.7.2 Recommended treatments

- The School advises parents to read the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet, available from the Junior School Reception. The 10-Day Hair Conditioner Treatment is the Department's preferred treatment.

7.7.3 Checking hair for head lice

- **Class or whole school 'head checks'**

School staff and the School nurse **do not routinely** undertake class head checks for head lice, as this is not an efficient or effective strategy for head lice control. Head lice can move at up to 30 cm per minute. They move rapidly away from searching hands and so an infestation can easily be missed. It is the responsibility of individual parents to check their own child's hair for head lice. Screening for head lice is most effectively undertaken by parents combing their child's hair using hair conditioner to slow down the head lice, together with a metal 'nit' comb, as described in the Department of Health's head lice fact sheet.

- **Checking a student who is believed to have head lice:**

In the case of an individual student, staff members may examine a student's hair where there is reason to believe a student may have head lice, i.e. where eggs (nits) or crawling head lice have been sighted or where a child is scratching the head excessively. The [School Education Act 1999](#) authorises the School Principal to do this.

Staff are aware that a 'dry' head check may be unreliable. If, on inspection, no signs of infestation are seen, the parent is nevertheless informed and is asked to check using hair conditioner.

7.7.4 Exclusion of a student from school

- Under the School Education Act 1999, students found to have head lice may be excluded from school at the discretion of the Principal / Head of Junior School until treatment has begun and all live head lice are being removed, in accordance with the Department of Health treatment advice. In practice, this means students can return to school the morning after treatment has commenced, provided that effective treatment is completed consistently over the following 10 days. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for exclusion [view the relevant Regulations of the School Education Act 1999].

- Students found to have head lice will normally be excluded at the end of the school day, or at the discretion of the Principal / Head of Junior School.

8 BREACH

If staff breach these guidelines, they may be subject to disciplinary actions.

Responsibility: Head of Junior School

Review Date: July 2018

Next Review Date: July 2019