
Policy: Head Lice

School: Benalla P-12 College

Section: Students 3.2

Version: Four

Head Lice Policy

Basic Beliefs:

- Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. While parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.
- An active management and awareness program has shown to have a significant effect on reducing head lice infestations.
- Parents will be notified if students are found to have head lice or nits. Treatment must be carried out before the child can return to school.

Guidelines:

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.
- Up-to-date information available from website: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice>.
- The primary focus of the head lice management will be to identify sources of infestations and actively encourage appropriate treatment.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information and by alerting parents of lice when detected.
- All families will be provided with advice on the latest information regarding head lice at the beginning of the year.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the College will ensure that the parents/guardian are informed their child has head lice and need to be treated and refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. (It should be noted that students may be treated one evening and return to school the next day and that the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion).
- Parents/guardians need to be aware that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/pages/headlice.aspx>
- The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion however the parents must still be informed.
- The College will also provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about safe head lice treatment practices and prevention.
- The College will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy outbreaks and
- notify parents/guardians to refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. This will be done at least once per term by the newsletter coordinator.

Basis for discretion:

The basis for discretion lies with the Principal as an operational matter.

Date ratified by Benalla P-12 College Council: 22 October, 2018

Recommended date for review: October, 2020

Date Implemented:	March, 2013
Reviewed and Amended Version One	October, 2013
Reviewed and Amended Version Two	May, 2016
Reviewed and Amended Version Three	August, 2018

Appendix One: Head Lice Alert (Parent Notice)



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HEAD LICE NOTICE

Dear Parents & Carers,

There has been a report of head lice in the classroom of <insert details here>.

Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. You may be reassured to know that head lice are commonly found in places other than at Benalla P-12 College. Head lice are common in school-aged children and are the most adaptable creatures. They have survived living solely on humans for 10,000 years!! There is no way to prevent head lice so it's important to check your child's hair regularly even when you don't think they have head lice.

THE FACTS

- head lice are one of the most commonly reported health complaints from parents and teachers
- anyone can catch head lice regardless of their age, sex, or how clean their hair is
- head lice move from one person's head to another via direct contact with the hair
- head lice do not survive long when they are off a human head
- head lice do not live on furniture, hats, bedding or carpet
- head lice have built up some resistance to head lice treatments

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We seek your co-operation in checking your child's hair frequently and in those instances where head lice or eggs are found, please commence treatment. Contact your local chemist, who will advise you of the appropriate treatment for your child.

If head lice or eggs are found in your child's hair you need to inform:

- The school and advise when the treatment commenced
- Parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

We are aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and are committed to maintaining your confidentiality. Please see over the page for treatment options.

I appreciate your assistance in this regard,

Yours faithfully,

Tony Clark
Executive Principal

Respect

Responsibility

High Expectations

Integrity

Treatment

Head lice are only found on the human head or hair. Head lice do not live on furniture, hats, bedding, carpet or anywhere else in the environment. Treating anything other than the human head does not eradicate head lice.

If your child has head lice we recommend that you treat your child and continue to check for the eggs or lice every other day.

There are two treatment options:

- Mechanical Removal
- Chemical and Mechanical Removal

Mechanical removal or 'comb and conditioner' method

What you need for this method:

- Normal comb to detangle hair prior to using metal lice comb
- Fine toothed metal lice comb (available from your local chemist or online)
- Conditioner - buy a cheap brand as you will be needing a lot of it, and preferably one that is white to make spotting the lice easier
- White paper towel

Mechanical removal involves applying conditioner to dry hair. Cover all of the hair with conditioner, detangle hair with normal comb and separate into sections. Then, using a fine long toothed metal lice comb, comb through the hair in sections. The conditioner does not kill lice but stuns them for about 20 minutes enabling easier removal. The long toothed metal comb will remove nits and the stunned head lice. Wipe the comb on a white tissue and check for any lice or nits. Keep combing until no more appear on the tissue. This method should be done every second or third day until no nits and lice remain, usually about 7 to 10 days. Please see the explanation below for more detailed guidance.

This method is the preferred way to detect and treat head lice because it is effective, does not contribute to insecticide resistance in head lice and also presents a low risk of skin irritation.

This method also helps manage head lice before they become established on the head. Simply keep a good head lice comb in the shower and every time your family washes their hair use the fine comb through the hair. This will ensure lice are "caught" before they lay too many eggs. If your children are old enough to wash their own hair encourage them to use the comb themselves. Or keep a comb handy to where you wash your children's hair and use it every shampoo.

Chemical removal

What you need for this method:

- Normal comb to detangle hair prior to using metal lice comb
- Chemical treatment containing synthetic or natural insecticides that kill head lice (talk to your local pharmacist to identify the treatments containing insecticides)
- Fine toothed metal lice comb (available from your local chemist or online)
- White paper towel

If you choose to use a chemical treatment, remember to follow the instructions carefully. You will also need to comb through the hair to ensure the treatment is working. If you find dead lice it means the product has worked. If you find live lice, the treatment has not worked. Don't be tempted to re-apply or over-apply the same chemical if it doesn't appear to be working. Instead switch to another treatment that uses a different chemical compound or use the 'comb and conditioner method' as described under the mechanical removal. It is very important that you repeat the chemical treatment in seven days to kill any newly hatched eggs as most chemical treatments will not kill the eggs (nits).

Once your child is free of lice and nits, remember to regularly check with a fine toothed head lice comb and conditioner as described above. Early detection and treatment will prevent re-infestation of other family members and classmates.