

### A. Definitions

1. **Lice:** Tiny grey to brown insects about the size of a sesame seed that live in human hair and feed on human blood to survive. Lice do not fly or jump, but crawl. Without a human host they can only live for about one or two days. Head lice are not known to transmit disease. Head lice spread through direct head-to-head contact with an infected person or indirect contact with lice-carrying objects such as combs, brushes, hats or scarves. Anyone may become infested with head lice, regardless of age, sex, race, socio-economic status, or standards of personal hygiene.
2. **Nits:** Tiny white oval-shaped louse eggs about the size of a knot in a thread attached to strands of hair. Many nits are more than ¼" from the scalp and are usually not viable or likely to hatch to become crawling lice. Nits cemented to hair shafts are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people. Nits usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

### B. Identification and Treatment

1. When a student is identified or suspected to be infected with head lice, the student should be removed from the classroom as unobtrusively as possible for further inspection and to determine the next course of action. The student should be inspected in an area in the school that protects the privacy of the student. The District reserves the right to inspect other known individuals that attend school and are in close personal contact with the student, such as siblings.
  - a. A student may be suspected of having head lice if the following are noted: (1) the student complains of an "itchy scalp" or is observed scratching his/her scalp, (2) the student has open sores/lesions on the scalp, or (3) lice and/or nits are observed on the student's scalp.
2. If a student is found to have nits-only, the student will generally be allowed to remain in school and will be monitored for signs of re-infestation. Exceptions may be made as determined appropriate and necessary by the nurse serving the school, the building principal, or his/her trained designee. If the school has not previously been in communication with the student's parent or guardian regarding the situation, the student's parent or guardian will be notified.
3. If live head lice are found, the student's parent or guardian shall be notified that day by telephone or by having a note sent home with the

student at the end of the school day. The notification will state that prompt, proper treatment of the head lice is in the best interest of the student and his/her classmates. Students with live lice normally do not need to be sent home early from school but can usually go home at the end of the school day, be treated, and return to class after the parent or guardian provides confirmation that appropriate treatment has begun.

4. The parent(s) or guardian of a student with live head lice shall be given written information and oral directions for head lice treatment at home. Specifically, the parent(s) or guardian will be provided with the following information, or with similar treatment information approved by a nurse serving a school.
  - a. The student's head should be examined, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck for crawling lice and nits.
  - b. All household members should be examined if lice or nits are found on a family member. Only those with evidence of an infestation should be treated.
  - c. There are many acceptable treatment options (e.g., over-the-counter medications such as Nix<sup>®</sup> or prescription medications); however, treatment with a product that is both a pediculicide as well as an ovoidal (egg killing agent) is the most effective way to kill lice and prevent further reinfestation. Head lice treatment must be followed exactly as instructed on the package.
  - d. Nits that are within ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft should be removed following head lice treatment. Removal of all nits after successful treatment with a pediculicide is not necessary. Nits that are attached more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft are almost always non-viable.
  - e. All combs and brushes used on infested persons should be soaked in very hot water (>130° F), Lysol<sup>®</sup>, rubbing alcohol or a lice-killing chemical for about one (1) hour.
  - f. Clothing, bed linens, hats, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2-day period just before treatment should be washed in hot water or machine dried at the hottest setting for 20 minutes. Clothing and items that are not washable (e.g., stuffed animals) can be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for two weeks.

g. Carpets, furniture and mattresses should be vacuumed thoroughly, and the vacuum bag discarded.

h. Hair should be retreated according to treatment protocol.

5. The student shall be excused from school attendance for the purpose of treatment but will be expected to return to school as soon as possible, preferably the next school day following an effective treatment such that the parent or guardian finds no live head lice. Verification of treatment should be provided by the student's parent(s) or guardian upon the student's return to school.

Notifications may be made to alert parents and guardians regarding cases of head lice in the school.

#### C. Readmission to School After Treatment

1. The nurse serving the school, building principal, or his/her trained designee will inspect the student upon return to school following treatment. If the student is still infested with head lice, the student's parent or guardian will be re-contacted and further treatment will be necessary.
2. Once determined that live head lice are no longer present, the student shall be re-admitted to school.
3. The nurse serving the school, building principal or his/her trained designee may recheck the student as needed.

#### D. Recordkeeping and Reporting

1. Head lice cases occurring in a school should be reported to the nurse serving the school and the building principal. Head lice cases are not reportable to the public health department unless there are other communicable disease related concerns.
2. Any records created related to head lice cases should be maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and District 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.

#### E. Prevention and Control

1. Parents and guardians should perform regular lice checks on the scalp of their children who attend school, especially when excessive itching is noticed.
2. Head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact should be avoided during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
3. Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, or hair accessories.
4. Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person.
5. Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.

The nurse serving the school shall collaborate with the public health department or other resources in planning assistance to families who have chronic lice infestation.

**Adopted: 10/18/21**