

MAFFRA PRIMARY SCHOOL HEAD LICE POLICY

RATIONALE

- Head lice have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice and given the chance, head lice move from head to head without discrimination.
- While parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents/guardians and students.

DESCRIPTION

The head louse starts as a small egg about the size of a grain of salt which the female louse glues to the base of the hair shaft. Most often these eggs (nits) are found in the hair behind the ears, at the back of the neck, or around the crown and under the fringe. The eggs hatch in 7-10 days. They mature into an adult louse, which is a wingless insect 2-3mm long with a flat body and six legs. The adult louse is capable of laying eggs after 10 days. Lice are very quick moving and very difficult to see in the hair.

Headlice generally cause itching behind the ears and at the back of the neck. They are spread by direct contact with the scalp of an infested person, or by contact with personal items (such as combs, brushes, hats, scarves, jackets, sweaters, sheets, pillows and pillowcases, blankets, upholstered furniture etc)

GUIDELINES

- Children with head lice are required under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations to be excluded from school until treatment has commenced. A child with head lice can be treated one evening and return to school the next day.
- A permission form – Head Lice Inspection pro forma will form part of the Maffra Primary School Confidential Student Enrolment Form. This will seek the consent of parents to inspections for the presence of head lice. A newsletter announcement at the beginning of each year will remind parents of this ongoing permission.
- There is no product available that prevents head lice. Using the conditioner and comb method (which is described in this document) once a week, will help families detect any head lice early and minimise the problem. Tying long hair up can help prevent the spread of head lice.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Throughout the year, the school will arrange head lice inspections of students as necessary. The school is aware that this can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining student confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation.
- Before any inspections are conducted, students will be told what is being done and why, and it will be emphasized to students that the presence of head lice in their hair does not mean that their hair is less clean or well kept than anyone else's. It will also be pointed out that head lice can be itchy and annoying and if you know you have them you can do something about it.
- The inspections of students' hair will be conducted by a member of an approved Head Lice inspection team, all of whom are school council approved, have a current Police Check and are aware of the school's privacy policy. Inspections will take place on a needs basis.
- The person conducting the inspections will check through each student's hair to see if any lice or eggs are present. In cases where live head lice are found, the student's class teacher and the Principal will be informed. The school will then make appropriate contact with the parents/guardians and the child will leave school immediately to commence treatment. Where eggs are present, parents/guardian will be contacted and treatment will need to be completed before the child return to school.
- The school will regularly distribute information on the detection and safe treatment and control of head lice to parents and guardians. They will be reminded of the importance of checking their child's hair at least weekly.
- When head lice are detected, parents need to be aware that one treatment of a head lice control product is not sufficient to kill all of the eggs. Treatment must involve two applications, seven days apart. The purpose of the first treatment is to kill all lice, the second treatment is to kill young lice hatched over the next six days. If a teacher suspects that a student has re-attended school with live lice, then an inspection can be requested and the school may exclude the student until the live insects have been removed.
- The school will notify parents/guardians in writing when head lice has been detected in a child. There will be a detachable slip on the letter requiring parents to indicate the treatment used and when treatment commenced. This slip is to be returned to school when the child resumes.
- It is highly recommended and preferred that children with long hair come to school with the hair secured. Head lice are easily transferred via long, swinging hair. The school may arrange for long hair to be secured in a ribbon if deemed an ongoing concern.

Ratified by School Council November 26th, 2007

Reviewed by School Council Curriculum Committee May 27th, 2010

Maffra Primary School Advice to Parents Regarding Head Lice

Regular, once a week, inspection of your child's hair for lice or lice eggs is recommended.

Using conditioner and a head lice comb is the most effective method.

STEP 1. Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed and detangled hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.

STEP 2. Now comb sections of the hair with a fine-tooth, head lice comb.

STEP 3. Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

STEP 4. Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

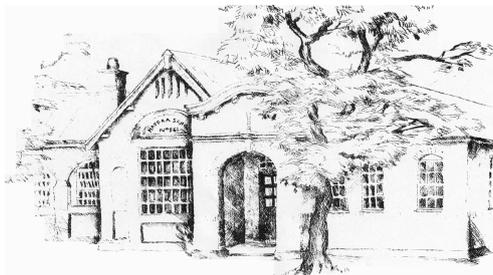
STEP 5. Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4 or 5 times.

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Maffra Primary School
Learning is our Future

29 August 2007

Dear Parents / Guardians

Today, your child underwent a head lice check. This was performed by members of our Head Lice Prevention Team.

Unfortunately, head lice and/or eggs were detected. Please begin treatment. If live head lice were detected it is important that your child does not return to school until these are treated and totally removed. **This is essential as other children may be infected.**

The two preferred treatment options available for treating head lice are the “conditioner and comb” method and the use of an insecticide (talk to your chemist about the most suitable product). Both methods require follow-up treatment. Insecticide products require two applications, seven days apart. The conditioner and comb method (described below) should be used every second day until no lice have been found for ten days.

STEP 1. Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed and detangled hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.

STEP 2. Now comb sections of the hair with a fine-tooth, head lice comb.

STEP 3. Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

STEP 4. Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

STEP 5. Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4 or 5 times.

Step 6. As an extra precaution, it is often helpful to eradicate lice by washing bed linen, cushion covers, brushes and combs.

It is important that we work together to minimise the incidence of headlice in our school. Please return the following slip to the school office when your child resumes school and indicate what treatment has been used.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

MAFFRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child's Name _____

Room number _____

I have treated my child's hair with

_____ and began this treatment on

My child is now ready to return to school as all live head lice and eggs have been removed.

Signed _____

Please return to school with your child following treatment.