



HEAD LICE

RATIONALE

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/guardian and students.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore they need to be eradicated.

AIMS

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively;
- To outline Parent / Carer responsibilities;
- To outline School responsibilities;
- To ensure that Parent / Carers are well informed about head lice treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION

Parent / Carer Responsibilities include:

- Complete and return CONSENT FORM TO CONDUCT HEAD LICE INSPECTIONS (Permission is to cover the duration of the student's schooling at Moolap Primary School);
- Ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice;
- The use of safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk: - unsafe practices include treating hair with a product that contains an insecticide more often than once per week or using it as a preventative measure; using pet flea or tick treatments; fly spray or insecticidal surface sprays and dangerous products such as kerosene.

To achieve this, it is reasonable to expect parents and carers will:

- Regularly (preferably once a week) inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary;
- Notify the school if their child is affected and advise the school when the treatment was started;
- Notify the parents or Carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary;
- Ensure that all long hair (that is hair length below the collar) is tied back in a neat and tidy manner.

Exclusion under the Health (Infectious Disease) Regulations 2009 refers to exclusion of children from school or children's services centres until the day after appropriate treatment has started. In the case of head lice, appropriate treatment refers to treatment that removes live lice. For instance, the use of combing and conditioner can constitute appropriate treatment. If a child re-attends school with live lice, they can again be excluded until the live insects have been removed.

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE AND KINDERGARTEN STAFF

It is reasonable to expect schools and child care centers will be responsible for:

- The distribution of policies and information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff as required.
- Providing support for parents through:
 - Practical advice and a sympathetic attitude so as to avoid stigmatizing families which are experiencing difficulty with the control measures; and
 - Encouraging parents to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child for head lice. Older children could be taught to use conditioner to check their own hair (see the resources section of <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/head-lice>)

Moolap Primary School has adopted an integrated and systematic management approach to head lice management in the following ways:

- Accessing community educational resources and support;
- Occasional inspections of students conducted by a trained person approved by the principal and school council;
- In cases where head lice are found, the person inspecting the student/s will inform the student's teacher and the Principal.
- The school will make appropriate contact with the parents/guardians/carers to inform them that their child requires treatment.
- At the end of the school day, the child will be provided with an "**Action Taken' Form** to take home to tell their parents that they may have head lice.
- Health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that **child should not return to school until appropriate treatment has commenced.**
- Parents are requested to return the completed '**Action Taken' Form** to the school office on the return of their child/ren which requires them to nominate treatment type and date treatment commenced.
- Follow up checks may be conducted on students to ensure that treatment has been successful and live lice are not present.
- Parents will be informed of head lice within the school / grade and asked to check their children's hair.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.

References

Public Health & Wellbeing Regulations 2009