

# **WINCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

## **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)**

It is the position of the Winchester School Nurses and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that the management of pediculosis should not disrupt the educational process. There is no scientific evidence that warrants the exclusion of children, no disease is associated with head lice, and in-school transmission is considered to be rare. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), NASN, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) find “No Nit” policies are not effective in reducing lice outbreaks.

“The school nurse is the key health professional to provide education and anticipatory guidance to the school community regarding best practice in the management of pediculosis. The school nurse’s goals are to facilitate an accurate assessment of the problem, contain infestation, provide appropriate health information for treatment and prevention, prevent overexposure to potentially hazardous chemicals, and minimize school absence” (NASN, 2011).

It may be appropriate to screen children who have had close head to head contact with a student with an active infestation, such as household family members, but classroom-wide or school-wide screening is not merited. Periodic head checks by parents/guardians, resulting in early detection, treatment and removal of live lice and nits, is the most reliable method for controlling pediculosis.

In cases that involve head lice, as in all school health issues, it is vital that the school nurse prevent stigmatizing and maintain the student’s privacy as well as the family’s right to confidentiality. The school nurse is available to educate parents/guardians, teachers and children on proper identification and elimination of this pest to minimize interruption of classroom time.

### **Our Goals:**

1. Provide effective management of head lice in school.
2. Minimize student absences due to head lice infestation.
3. Educate school community about head lice: Prevention, Identification, Management

### **References:**

- Devore, C.D., Schutze, G.E. (2015). Head Lice. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 135 (5)1356 -1365.
- Frankowski, B.L.,& Bocchini, J.A. (2010). Clinical Report- Head Lice. *Pediatrics*, 126 (2) 392-403.
- National Association of School Nurses (2016). Head lice management in the school setting (position statement). Silver Spring, MD.

## **PROCEDURE:**

- When a student is found to have head lice they will be referred to the parent/guardian for appropriate treatment.
- The nurse will check siblings in the school and offer the parent/guardian assistance if needed, in identification of head lice. The parent/guardian will be advised to check with their primary care provider for recommended treatment.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify close contacts.
- The student may return to school after adequate treatment in consultation with the school nurse. Parents/guardians should report treatment used and are advised to check their child's head daily for at least 2-3 weeks.
- The school nurse may exclude a student until the treatment is deemed satisfactory for re-entry.
- When a case of head lice is identified, the school nurse may decide to check the student's friends or classmates.
- Parents/guardians may be notified to check their child's heads. All household members should be examined if lice or nits are found on a family member.
- Parents/guardians are advised to check their child's hair regularly and notify the school nurse if their child is found to have head lice. When treatment is required the student and parent should be seen by the nurse before coming back to school.
- Confidentiality will be respected.
- Educational information and current supporting websites are available on the Winchester Public Schools website, and on an as needed basis from the school nurse.
- Educational teaching websites:
  1. National Association of School Nurses  
[www.nasn.org/](http://www.nasn.org/) - (tools & resources: Lice Lessons)
  2. CDC: [www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/)
  3. Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/g-i/head-lice.pdf>
  4. Suggested tutorial from NASN: [A Parent's Guide to Head Lice](#)