

15<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

It has come to our attention that a small number of students in our school are being treated for head lice. While lice are nothing more than a nuisance, it is important that children are checked on a weekly basis so that any head lice can be dealt with quickly and before they can be allowed to spread. **As there have been a couple of cases already, we would ask you to check your child's head as soon as possible.** Please follow the simple routine below to ensure that you are doing all you can to keep head lice outbreaks to a minimum.

## 1. USE A DETECTION COMB TO CHECK YOUR CHILD FOR HEAD LICE

The only way to be certain that you or your child has head lice is to find a live louse. Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner. Lean forward over a white surface such as a washbasin, towel or paper spread on a table. Thoroughly comb hair from the roots outwards with a detection comb (a special fine-toothed comb that can be obtained from most chemist shops). Work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through. Any lice that are present will be combed out or will get stuck between the teeth of the comb. This confirms the presence of lice.

**If no lice are found you do not need to take any further action but we would advise you to continue checking your child's hair once a week.**

## 2. IF YOU FIND LICE, YOU WILL NEED TO TREAT YOUR CHILD

• **Wet combing** involves removing head lice with a special fine-toothed comb. It's suitable for everyone and is relatively inexpensive. A number of lice removal combs are available to buy from most chemist shops. The comb may come with instructions outlining how to use it. A commonly used method is described below.

- ✓ Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner.
- ✓ Use an ordinary, wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- ✓ Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb.
- ✓ Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- ✓ Draw the comb down from the roots to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice each time – remove lice by wiping the comb with tissue paper or rinsing it.
- ✓ Work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- ✓ Do this at least twice to help ensure you haven't missed any areas, until no more lice are found.
- ✓ Repeat this procedure on days five, nine and thirteen. Detection combing should be done on day 17, to check for any live head lice.

**After one session of combing all adult lice will have been combed out and the person will no longer be infectious.**

### • Lotions and sprays

**Treatments to get rid of head lice are available to buy from pharmacies, supermarkets and online.** There are several different products that can be applied to the scalp and hair to kill head lice. The manufacturer's instructions on use should be followed.

Everyone with head lice in your household should be treated on the same day and if a treatment doesn't work the first time, you can try it again, try a different treatment, or get advice from your pharmacist or GP.

### 3. WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO DO?

If your child does have head lice, check all other members of the household (including parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents) with the detection comb to see if they have lice. If they do, then they will need to be treated.

Contacts of a person with head lice should only be treated if head lice are found. It is not necessary to treat anyone unless you have shown that they have lice. Automatic treatment with lotions or sprays is unnecessary.

Tell contacts of affected family members about the problem with head lice including any school, nursery or playgroup that they attend. The parents of friends and classmates can then be alerted so that they can examine their own children.

### 4. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT HEAD LICE?

Children and adults should brush or comb their hair thoroughly at least once a day.

Use the detection comb on wet hair once a week to check for lice and take action if you find any.

### 5. EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

Exclusion of a child with head lice from school should not be necessary provided treatment has been started.

### 6. FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

For further information on head lice please see your pharmacist or visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice)

Yours faithfully



G Hill

Head teacher