

# HEAD LICE

## POLICY

### **Rationale:**

- Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time\*. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which can distract children from their learning. Some students can also be allergic to head lice treatments so preventing and controlling infestation is particularly important.

### **Aims:**

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their treatment.

### **Implementation:**

- Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information and by alerting parents of lice when detected.
- The school principal, teachers and aides can carry out visual checks of student's heads for head lice (observations without touching of the students head or hair). The principal will also identify specific staff members or parent volunteers to carry out head lice inspections (physical examinations) of students head and hair for the presence of head lice.
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be inspected by our specific staff members for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2009, the principal will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that their

child are to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced.

- Information from the Victorian Department of Health Website (September 2012) states that this information should be interpreted as follows:  
Students can return to school the same day if appropriate treatment has commenced.
- The principal will also provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must present the school a signed declaration indicating that appropriate treatment has commenced. All excluded children may undergo another inspection (physical or visual) from our trained head lice inspectors upon recommencement of school.
- The principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy infestations.
- training of appropriate school personnel in detection and management of head lice at the school level.

**Evaluation:**

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

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**December 2018**