

Policy Document No: MC3
Category: Health Centre
Topic: Head Lice Policy



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In addressing the perennial problem of head lice (pediculosis), all three campuses will be guided by State Government; Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009.

Pediculosis is NOT a notifiable condition and head lice do not transmit any infectious diseases. Head lice are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice as happens frequently in families, schools and childcare centres.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

While head lice is not considered an agent for infectious disease they are included on the school exclusion table.

This school policy draws on information obtained from the Information Pamphlet and Management Guidelines 'Scratching for Answers'

https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/getfile/?sc_itemid=%7bE5770E5D-591C-4BCF-90EB-287CF5B0973D%7d&title=Head%20lice%3A%20Scratching%20for%20answers%20-%20Frequently%20asked%20questions

1. Parents/Guardians responsibilities:
 - Your children's hair is to be checked for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method.
 - That your child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009)
 - Regularly inspect all household members and treat if necessary.
 - Parents/Guardians will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced.
 - Children with long hair will attend school with their hair tied back.
 - Use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice.
 - Notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.
 - Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
 - Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

2. To support parents/guardians and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to:
 - Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff as frequently as required.
 - Include information about head lice management for new families/staff attending school.
 - Include information and updates in school newsletters.

- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the School Nurse or Principal.

The exclusion criteria for head lice should be interpreted as:

At the conclusion of the school day, provide the child with a note to take home to inform their parents that they have head lice. Children may return to school after treatment has commenced.

- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue.
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required.
- Review the head lice policy annually.

Also to be noted:

Pediculosis is not a notifiable condition.

A child with head lice can be treated and returned to school the next day even if there are some eggs present.

There is no legal requirement (under the Health Act 1958 or Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001) to obtain consent for head lice inspections. There is no requirement in the Regulations for a clearance certificate to be issued either by a general practitioner or a council.

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/factsheets/Public%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Regulations%202009>

The exact wording of these regulations is at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

Students will be inspected by staff on a case by case basis. No mass inspections will be conducted.

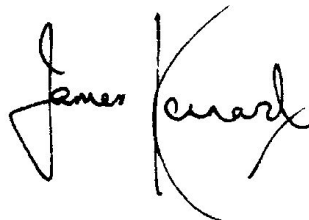
Successful control of head lice depends on a community approach, both in notification & treatment.

Advice regarding current recommendations for treatment is available from both the Health Centres & the Department of Human Services. Matron at Burwood also has a short video on head lice, which may be useful and is able to be borrowed.

You may contact the Gandel Health Centre direct on 9834 0077, G.B.H. Health Centre direct on 9900 4677 and the Public Health Nurse, General Surveillance and Control Communicable Diseases Section, Department of Human Services on 9637 4141 if you would like more information or support.

www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations

Approved by College Principal:



Date: December 2016