

Dear Parents/Caregivers

HEAD LICE ADVICE, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Head lice is a very common problem amongst students aged 4-14 years old. It is estimated, according to the NSW Health Department, that 23% of primary students will have head lice at any one time. Head lice are also twice as likely to occur in girls as boys. This is not because the lice prefer girl's hair but rather that girls are more likely to give their friends a hug, play closely with each other and generally have longer hair than boys.

I am sure you are also aware that lice have no preference between clean and dirty hair. The hair is really only a vehicle for the lice to get to the scalp. They need to suck blood from the scalp to live. No one is immune from head lice and having them is not a comment on someone's cleanliness.

Treatment of head lice can be very difficult. This is because the lice population is growing in their resistance to chemical treatments. This leaves the most effective method as the painstaking process of removing them using a fine tooth comb and hair conditioner. This treatment option is detailed more by clicking the website below.

<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/165/351/Head-Lice>

This is the Queensland Government's website on lice facts and treatment. Because a treatment requires an enormous amount of commitment, diligence and patience to eradicate completely, it can take its toll on family life and is stressful for the parents and the student.

The only way to effectively deal with this problem is if all parents/caregivers are diligent in checking their child's hair. Do not think that because your son or daughter is not scratching that they do not have head lice. Many children do not exhibit any symptoms at all.

If we all check then we are all doing each other a favour. That is part of what living in community is all about.

Head lice are most likely to be on the nape of the neck and behind the ears. They do not like light and these areas are the darkest on the head. Nevertheless the whole head needs to be very thoroughly checked. Please click below to find a YouTube clip on how to check your child for lice.

<https://youtu.be/mAsfE8AWxzU>

This is a community health problem and needs a community based solution.

Prevention is also very important. These tips are from this website
<http://hubpages.com/health/Head-Lice-Treatment-and-Prevention>

1. Check your children's hair daily. DAILY! It is much easier to pull out a few nits that have recently made a home in your daughter's beautiful mane, than hundreds...or God forbid, the actual little bugs that those eggs turn into in 7-14 days.
2. Braid long hair every day in two braids. Make them fairly tight so they don't slip out during the course of the day. Not too tight so that it hurts, but enough to withstand active play. Ponytails are not good enough. Braid that hair. It doesn't take long and goes a long way in protecting your child and you.
3. Reiterate to young children the reasons why they cannot share brushes and hats and scarves with their friends. Tell them daily before they go to school. This little gesture can go a long way in keeping little creepy crawlies at bay.

College staff will not be checking hair under normal circumstances. However, if a teacher has a reasonable suspicion that a student has a case of lice, such as if a child is persistently scratching, they will be sent to the Main Admin for a more thorough check. If the child is found to have either lice or nits you will be asked to collect your child. This is in order to stop any spread of the head lice.

Treatment and prevention are the only ways that head lice infestations can be defeated. It is important that we are always vigilant and that as a community of parents we are committed to the cause of making our school as lice and nit free as possible.

I would really like to thank everyone for their cooperation. Together we will be able to conquer this problem and create a more comfortable learning environment for our children and families.

Regards



Mike Curtis
Principal