



Ball Green Primary School

Headlice Policy

Introduction:

Head lice are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed. They move from one person to another from head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. They cannot jump to another person's head. Head lice lay eggs which hatch after 7-10 days. It takes about 10 days for a recently hatched louse to grow into an adult and start to lay eggs.

Nits are the empty white egg shells which are left when the lice hatch. Nits look like dandruff but stick strongly to hair. Unlike dandruff, you cannot easily brush out nits. Children who get head lice may feel embarrassed or ashamed, but they shouldn't. Anyone can get head lice. It has nothing to do with being clean or dirty and lice do not spread disease or illness.

Parents' responsibilities:

Mass screening of all pupils in a classroom and/or school does not control the spread of head lice. Rather, the spread of head lice can be minimized with **routine** inspection for live head lice and nits by **all** parents and full treatment of those pupils with live head lice.

Parents and guardians are responsible for :

- ✓ Knowing head lice signs and symptoms;
- ✓ Routinely checking their child's head for head lice, - recommended at least once a week;
- ✓ Telling their child's school, close friends, etc., that their child has head lice;
- ✓ Ensuring that full, proper treatment has been completed before the pupil returns to school.

Advice to parents - how to find head lice:

- ✓ Severe itching is the most common sign of head lice;
- ✓ Look for head lice and tiny white or grey coloured eggs called nits. Nits look like tiny water drops and are stuck on the hair. They are hard to remove. While nits might signal a live infestation, they don't necessarily mean that live head lice are present, - the eggs may have already hatched;
- ✓ Check your own head and the heads of everyone who lives in the home;
- ✓ Advise school that your child has head lice, also tell the parents of your child's friends to check their child for head lice.

Every child. Every chance. Every day.

Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29: Ball Green Primary School has a responsibility to develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.



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How to treat head lice:

- ✓ Information about special medicated treatments is available from the pharmacist or doctor;
- ✓ Only use medicated treatments on your child's head if you find **live, moving** head lice. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully;
- ✓ **Do not use** medicated treatments if you just find eggs or nits;
- ✓ To treat eggs or nits, apply a thick layer of conditioner, - a large, bottle of branded conditioner can be purchased for less than 50p from a supermarket chain – and comb through, ideally with a nit comb, and tie back or plait hair if appropriate;
- ✓ After treating your child's hair, make sure there are no live head lice. If you still find head lice that are moving, go back to the pharmacist or doctor for help;
- ✓ You can choose to remove nits from the hair by pulling them off with your fingernails or a special lice comb, but this is not necessary.

After the first treatment parents should:

- ✓ Check the child's head to make sure the treatment was successful. It was successful if no live lice are found;
- ✓ Wash all pillowcases;
- ✓ Speak to a pharmacist about another chemical treatment if you still find live lice;
- ✓ Continue to check the child's head every day for 10 days. This is important as eggs that you are unlikely to have seen will continue to hatch;
- ✓ Do a second treatment 7 to 10 days after the first successful treatment. Chemical treatments do not completely kill eggs. The second treatment will kill lice that hatch after the first treatment.

After the second treatment parents should:

- ✓ Visually inspect the child's head to make sure the treatment was successful. • Parents can remove any nits if they choose;
- ✓ Inspect the child's head every two days for 10 consecutive days;
- ✓ After 10 days of inspecting without detecting more live head lice, return to checking the child's head at least once a week for nits and lice.

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How to prevent head lice:

Knowledge is one of the most important steps to both prevention and treatment. Parents and school staff both play key roles in preventing head lice. It is important that parents regularly check their child's head (see 'Advice to Parents' above) and encourage their child to follow the advice below –

- ✓ Do not share personal items, such as combs, hats and scarves;
- ✓ Keep hats and scarves in a coat sleeve or pocket instead of in a spot with other hats and scarves;
- ✓ Tie long hair back and plait if appropriate;
- ✓ Check your child's head at least every week for head lice.

School will –

- ✓ Publish this policy on the school website and regularly remind parents to check their child's head
- ✓ Promptly notify parents of active head lice infestations in their child's year group, referring parents to this policy.

Head lice and absence from school:

Having head lice is not a reason for school absence as treatment can be administered very quickly. However, should live head lice be noticed by a member of staff, a call will be made to the parent who will be asked to collect the child from school immediately. A thorough comb through or chemical treatment done quickly at home will enable the child to be back at school on the same day (unless of course parents are notified late in the afternoon). If the infestation continues for more than three weeks, the Home School Link Worker will call the parents to discuss what is being done to eradicate the head lice.

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