

HEAD LICE (“PEDICULOSIS”) POLICY

Purpose

Head lice, medically termed “*pediculosis*”, infest hairs by laying their eggs at the base of hair fibers, and taking periodic blood meals by piercing the skin of their host with narrow anterior mouthparts. Eggs (nits) need body warmth to incubate, and as a result, nits attach themselves to hair shafts just above the level of the scalp. Despite popular conceptions, lice do not hop or jump from one host to another, but are transmitted from person to person by direct contact and shared items, such as clothing. Not surprisingly, the condition more commonly affects elementary school-aged children who tend to share more common spaces and items, both in the classroom and at the coat hooks, and come into closer contact with one another than do their older counterparts.

The Principal has an obligation to maintain a healthy school environment. Because schools provide a fertile environment for the transmission of lice, developing a policy to address and prevent transmission of the condition among students is an important objective for King Christian School (the “School”).

Policy

1. Parents of children identified with head lice will be notified by the School by letter, and will be required to seek treatment for the child.
2. The parent is required to keep the child at home until the problem is cleared. The parent will be provided with an instruction sheet which contains information about remedy options and instructions for treating head lice, as recommended by public health authorities.
3. On returning to the School, the child is required to bring a letter signed by the parent indicating the treatment used, and confirming that the child is free of lice and nits. The letter will be reviewed by the Principal or designate.
4. If a returning child is not free of lice or nits, the child shall not be readmitted to class. The parent will be contacted by the School, and arrangements will be made for the child to return home as soon as possible. The parent will be provided with a further letter notifying them of the continued infection and the need for treatment.
5. All parents of children in a class in which a student or students are found to have head lice will be sent a letter informing them of that fact. The letter will contain a description of methods of observation and precautionary measures that can be taken in the home to monitor and treat head lice infestations.
6. The Principal may designate a person who is trained and available to perform head lice checks in the school, to verify suspected cases of head lice and/or to recheck returning students.
7. The School may designate a specific day or days for screening all students for head lice and nits, using a trained person. A letter will be sent to all parents informing them of this event. Individual parents may request that their child not participate in Screening Day activity.

These procedures impose positive obligations upon parents to both keep their children at home, and obtain appropriate treatment to clear up any lice infestation prior to permitting the child to return to school.

Appendix A – SAMPLE LETTER AND TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR PARENTS

(Put on School Letterhead)

HEAD LICE

Date:

Dear Grade [#] Parents:

We found out today that one of the students in the class has head lice. The parents are keeping the child at home until the problem has cleared.

1. Please check all your children’s hair/heads every day for the next week. See enclosed information.
2. Remind your child(ren) not to share brushes, hats or clothing with other students.
3. If you discover lice/nits, please inform the office.
4. Before sending your child(ren) back to school, all lice and nits need to be removed from the hair. On returning to the School, the child is required to bring a letter signed by the parent indicating the treatment used, and confirming that the child is free of lice and nits. The child will also be checked by a staff member to confirm they are free of lice and nits, before being admitted back to the classroom.
5. Please see attached for more information on how to treat Head Lice.

Sincerely,

[Name and Signature of Principal]

Treatment of Head Lice

What are Head Lice?

- Insects that live and breed on the head
- They feed by biting your scalp

How Do You Get Head Lice?

- Close contact with someone who has head lice (such as when heads touch during play or sports)
- Sharing of hats, scarves, combs, hair ribbons, pillows, brushes, towels and helmets
- Head lice are found more often among children ages 3-10 years and their families

Signs of Head Lice

- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair
- Itching, caused by an allergic reaction to the bites
- Irritability

HEAD LICE (“PEDICULOSIS”) POLICY

© 2021 King Christian School

This document is intended for use by King Christian School only and may not be used in whole or part by any other organization without the permission of King Christian School and Edvance Christian Schools Association. The original document can be found at Edvance.ca.

- Sores on the head caused by scratching (these can sometimes become infected)

Head Lice Treatments

- Talk to your doctor if:
 - If the child is under the age of two years
 - If the child has a seizure disorder
 - If the skin of the scalp has an infection
- Ask the pharmacist at your local pharmacy to recommend a product to treat head lice
 - Buy a head lice shampoo or conditioner from your drug store
 - Apply as instructed
 - The products kill the head lice and many eggs, but **a second treatment is needed 7 to 10 days later**
- Remove all nits by using fingernails or a nit comb
- It is suggested that you limit shampoo use, or not shampoo, between the two treatments and in the week following the second treatment. This will likely allow the head lice product to work more effectively
- Carefully check head daily between and after both treatments to remove any nits that are still present (do this in bright light)
 - Head lice and nits are commonly found around ears, forehead and nape of neck – check these areas carefully
- Check all close contacts

Required Housecleaning

- You must wash in hot, soapy water:
 - Hats, scarves, hairbrushes, combs, hair ribbons, pillowcases, towels, bed linens, machine washable stuffed toys and coats
- Wash items after the first and second treatment
- Vacuum surfaces where heads have rested (i.e. sofas, seats of cars, sports helmets)

Controlling the Spread

- Dry clean any items that cannot be machine washed (or place the items in an airtight bag for two weeks)
- Discourage head-to-head contact and sharing of hats, scarves, hairbrushes, combs and hair ribbons
- Tie long hair back in braids
- Check heads of all family members and people in close contact
- All family members with head lice should be treated at the same time
- Check young school age children regularly for head lice, and more often if there is an outbreak