

## 8454 MANAGEMENT OF PEDICULOSIS

The Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain a healthy learning environment for all children in the school district. One way to maintain this healthy learning environment is to manage pediculosis, a condition of a person having head lice. Head lice or pediculosis capitis, are brownish colored insects that are about the size of a sesame seed. Lice crawl from person to person, feeding off human blood to survive. Lice live approximately 21 days. They do not fly or jump or cause serious injury. Head lice do not spread any diseases and having head lice is not prevented by personal or household cleanliness, use of shampoos, or length of hair. All social and economic groups can be affected by head lice. Because it is very difficult to totally prevent head lice infestations in schools where children come into close head-to-head contact with each other frequently, the Board of Education authorizes appropriate steps to manage pediculosis.

Elementary school children are particularly susceptible to pediculosis infestation due to their close contact with peers, and through the sharing of clothing and personal items. Camping and sports (shared helmets) help promote transmission as well.

The most common source of infestation is through direct personal contact with an infested individual. Environmental items that may harbor lice and eggs (nits) such as combs, brushes, hats, helmets, clothing, towels, and bedding, are also sources of infestation.

Children who have pediculosis usually display the following symptoms:

- Itching often accompanied by scalp irritation such as scratches and rash.
- Presence of live lice on scalp.
- The presence of ova (eggs/nits) firmly attached to the base of individual hairs.

The Board recognizes parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice and school staff members will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families in managing pediculosis. The Board of Education's Management of Pediculosis Policy will be provided to parents of children identified with active head lice or nits and be made available to all parents upon request.

If the school nurse determines a student has active head lice, the parent shall be notified by the school nurse as soon as reasonably possible. The parent will be provided a copy of the district's Management of Pediculosis Policy. The school nurse will advise the parent that prompt treatment of active head lice is in the best interest of their child.



If the school nurse cannot contact the parent a letter from the school nurse informing the parent of the presence of active head lice or nits will be sent home with the student. In the event the parent cannot be reached on the day it is determined their child has active head lice the parent will be required to contact the school nurse the next school day to review the Board Policy and treatment options.

The following action will be taken to prevent the spread of head lice in district schools for grades K-12 when a single case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, the school nurse will contact the parent(s) and proceed as follows:

- a. Student who is reported to have infestation should complete a course of treatment. Parents who request advice are to be referred to a family physician.
- b. Advice will be offered at the discretion of the school nurse. No specific treatment is to be endorsed by the school nurse.
- c. Children who are being treated but present with nits will not be excluded from school.
- d. As per the American Academy of Pediatrics, school wide and class wide screenings are to be discouraged as both time consuming and ineffective.
- e. If a child complains of an itchy scalp and the nurse detects the presence of live lice, the nurse will employ discretion regarding the removal of the child from the classroom.
- f. Parents are to be encouraged to perform inspection of children at home. The school nurse may explain the method of thorough inspection to parents, reinforcing the need to screen over a period of two weeks. Parents are also to be advised that the most important symptom in the detection of head lice is not the discovery of live lice or nits, but the presence of an itchy scalp.

In the event of a classroom or school-wide outbreak of pediculosis, staff is to be encouraged to put the following procedures into place. The school should communicate such steps to parents in order to allay fears.

- a. Hats and coats in backpacks or plastic bags.
- b. Art smocks stored separately.
- c. A letter will be sent home to parent/guardian of all students in class of child with infestation. Wider dissemination of the letter is up to the discretion of the school nurse.
- d. Parents may also be provided with a letter containing information about pediculosis and the necessary steps to be taken.
- e. As per the American Academy of Pediatrics, school wide and class wide screenings are to be discouraged as both time consuming and ineffective.



- f. If a child complains of an itchy scalp, and the nurse detects the presence of live lice, the nurse will employ discretion regarding the removal of the child from the classroom.
- g. Parents may be encouraged to perform inspection of children at home. The school nurse may explain the method of thorough inspection to parents, reinforcing the need to screen over a period of two weeks. Parents are also to be advised that the most important symptom in the detection of lice is not the discovery of live lice, but the presence of an itchy scalp.
- h. Remind children constantly about sharing hats, clothing, brushes, etc.
- i. Remind children to keep their heads off of the rug when seated in a circle. (Some teachers requiring students to bring chair to circle).

Each school in the district will make available to parents the district's Management of Pediculosis Policy.

All school staff members will maintain a sympathetic attitude and will not stigmatize and/or blame families who experience difficulty with control measures. All school staff members will act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community regarding issues of head lice.

Each school in the district will educate and encourage children and parents to learn about head lice in an attempt to remove any stigma or to prevent any harassment, intimidation, and bullying associated with this issue. Any instances of harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be reported and investigated in accordance with the provisions of the district's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy.

A student excluded from school for reasons outlined in this Policy shall be re-admitted only upon the examination and approval of the school nurse. The examination for re-admittance to school by the school nurse may be, but is not required to be, in the presence of the student's parent.

Cases of active head lice will be recorded by the school nurse in each school for the purpose of tracking incident rates and mandatory reporting of outbreaks will be done according to the New Jersey Department of Health criteria for reporting outbreaks.

Adopted: 10 October 2016

