



Head Lice Policy

14-36 Lesdon Avenue Cranbourne 3977
Email: rangebank.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Tel: 5996 8900
Website: <http://www.rangebankps.vic.edu.au/>

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the control and management of head lice infections is a shared responsibility amongst a number of agencies, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; the Department of Human Services; schools and parents. The Department of Education and Training is responsible for providing advice and support to schools regarding head lice management. Our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Head lice is a health matter for parents and as such they are responsible for ensuring that their children do not have head lice.

The school is making every effort to remove the stigma associated with having head lice as we believe this contributes to improving the chances of correct treatment occurring.

It is the expectation of parents/ carers and families attending this school that-

- Children's hair should be checked for head lice on a weekly basis at home, using the recommended conditioner/ combing detection method.
- Parents should regularly inspect all household members and treat them if necessary.
- Parents / carers should notify the school if their child is found to have lice and advise when appropriate treatment has commenced – in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001.
- Children with long hair should attend school with their hair tied back.
- Parents should use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice.
- The school recommends the use of conditioner rather than commercially available treatments. Parents then need to comb their child's hair through with a steel toothed comb to make sure all eggs are removed.
- The school will maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising / blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.
- All parties should act responsibly and be respectful when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

To support parents / carers and the broader community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will undertake to-

- Distribute up to date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice, to parents and staff at the beginning of the year and as information becomes available.



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- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families / staff attending the school.
 - Include information and updates in the school newsletter (as appropriate).
 - Access community educational resources and support – primary school nurse, community health centres and local government.
 - Abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from school rests with the Principal.
 - If live head lice are found on a child, parents will be notified.
 - If a teacher finds a live louse infestation, the teacher needs to contact the office to ask advice. Parents will be notified.
 - Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced – however any evidence of live lice will require that parents are notified.
 - Encourage students to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue.
 - Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around the issues of head lice.
 - Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

APPENDIX:

- Head lice information
- Head lice Management Agreement between Schools and Parents/ Guardians/ Carers

EVALUATION:

Guidelines are updated annually and/ or as per DET recommendations.

CERTIFICATION:

This policy was adopted at the School Council Meeting held at Rangebank Primary School,

on

Signed..... Signed.....
School Council President Principal

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HEAD LICE INFORMATION

While children are at school many families will have contact with head lice. The information contained here will help you treat and control head lice.

About head lice



Enlarged image of head louse. Actual size 2 to 4 mm.

- Head lice have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice.
- Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on humans. If isolated from the head they die very quickly (usually within 24 hours).
- People get head lice from direct hair to hair contact with another person who has head lice. Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

Finding head lice

Many lice do not cause an itch, so you have to look carefully to find them.

Head lice are found on the hair itself and move to the scalp to feed. They have six legs which end in a claw and they rarely fall from the head. Louse eggs (also called nits) are laid within 1.5 cm of the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair. They resemble dandruff, but can't be brushed off.

Lice can crawl and hide. The easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps:

Step 1

Comb any type of hair conditioner on to dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or crawl around.

Step 2

Now comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth, head lice comb.

Step 3

Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

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Step 4

Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

Step 5

Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least four or five times



If lice or eggs are found, the hair should be treated.

If the person has been treated recently and you only find empty hatched eggs, you may not have to treat, as the empty eggs could be from a previous episode.

Treating head lice

Treating head lice involves removing lice and eggs from the hair. There are two ways you can do this:

1. Buying and using a head lice lotion or shampoo, following the instructions on the product
2. Using the conditioner and comb method (described under 'finding head lice') every second day until there have been no live lice found for ten days.

If you choose to use a head lice product always read and follow the instructions provided with the product carefully.

The following points may also be helpful:

- Head lice products must be applied to all parts of the hair and scalp.
- No treatment kills all of the eggs so treatment must involve two applications, seven days apart. The first treatment kills all lice; the second treatment kills the lice that may have hatched from eggs not killed by the first treatment.
- Cover the person's eyes while the treatment is being applied. A towel is a good way to do this.
- If you are using a lotion, apply the product to dry hair.
- If you are using a shampoo, wet the hair, but use the least amount of water possible.
- Apply the treatment near the scalp, using an ordinary comb to cover the hair from root to tip. Repeat this several times until all the hair is covered.

There is no need to treat the whole family - unless they also have head lice.



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Concentrate on the head - there is no need to clean the house or the classroom.

Only the pillowcase requires washing - either wash it in hot water (at least 60°C) or dry it using a clothes dryer on the hot or warm setting.

Testing resistance

Head lice products belong in one of the following categories depending on the active compound they contain:

- pyrethrins,
- synthetic pyrethroids (permethrin, bioallethrin),
- organophosphates (maldison or malathion),
- herbal with or without natural (non-chemical) pyrethrins.

Insecticide resistance is common, so you should test if lice are dead. If they are, treat again in seven days using the same product. If the lice are not dead, the treatment has not worked and the lice may be resistant to the product and all products containing the same active compound. Wash off the product and treat as soon as possible using a product containing a different active compound. If the insecticide has worked, the lice will be dead within 20 minutes.

Any head lice product could cause a reaction and should be used with care by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, children less than 12 months old and people with allergies, asthma or open wounds on the scalp. If you are unsure, please check with your pharmacist or doctor.

Head lice eggs

Head lice eggs are small (the size of a pinhead) and oval. A live egg will 'pop' when squashed between fingernails.

Dead eggs have crumpled sides and hatched eggs look like tiny boiled eggs with their tops cut off.

Head lice combs

Combs with long, rounded stainless steel teeth positioned very close together have been shown to be the most effective, however, any head lice comb can be used.

Regulations

According to the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, children with head lice can be readmitted to school or children's service centres after treatment has commenced.

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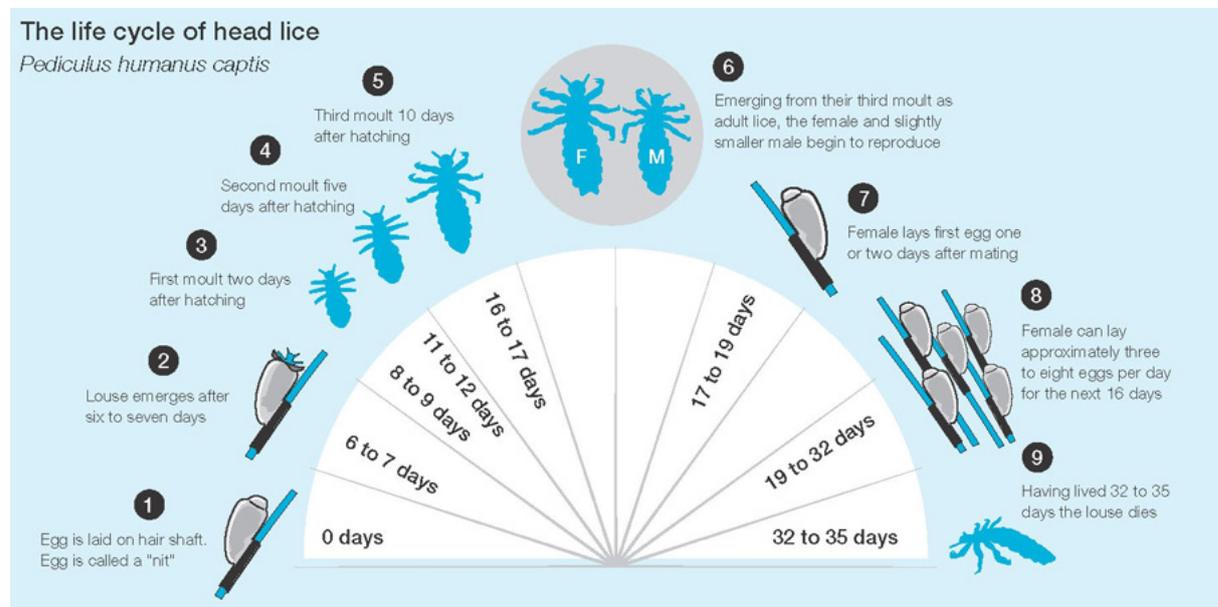
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The Department recommends a child with head lice can be treated one evening and return to school or children's service centres the next day, even if there are still some eggs present. There is no need to miss school or childcare because of head lice.

Preventing head lice

Check your child's head regularly with comb and conditioner. There is no research to prove that chemical or herbal therapies can prevent head lice.



Taken from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>



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HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND PARENTS/ GUARDIANS/ CARERS

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

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This agreement outlines the:

- Responsibilities of both the school and the parent/ guardian/ carer
- Importance of an inclusive health approach, to ensure an appropriate and efficient solution to the problem of head lice.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Parents/ Guardians/ Carer – responsibilities include:

- Regular (preferably once a week) inspecting their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspecting all household members and treating them if necessary.
- Ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice.
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk.
- Notifying the school if their child is affected and advising the school when the treatment has started.
- Notifying parents or carer of your child's friends so they have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

I have read and agreed to the above responsibilities.

Signature of parent/ guardian/ carer _____ Date _____

Signature of parent/ guardian/ carer _____ Date _____



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RESPONSIBILITIES:

School – responsibilities include:

- Distributing policies and information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/ guardians/ carers and having accessible clear protocols for the inspection program that the school implements.
- Developing a school policy on head lice which reinforces an accurate, consistent approach to the management of head lice infections, which is approved by School Council.
- Encourage those persons authorised by the Principal to visually check a student's hair (with no physical contact with the child) if the presence of head lice is suspected.
- Encouraging parents/guardians/ carers to continue to regularly check (preferably once a week) their child for head lice and providing a sympathetic attitude and practical advice to those parents experiencing difficulty with the control measures.
- Encouraging students to learn about head lice so as to remove any stigma or "bullying" associated with the issue.
- Being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from a school rests with the Principal and being aware that exclusion only refers to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs and being aware of the recommendation that students should be excluded from school at the conclusion of the school day where the student should be provided with a note to take home to inform the parent that their child may have head lice.
- Being aware that there is no requirement in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 for a child treated for head lice to obtain a clearance certificate to be issued either by a general practitioner or a municipal council, on return to school.
- Where appropriate, and at the Principal's discretion, providing an alert notice to the school community, where head lice has been detected in the school.

Rangebank Primary School is committed to managing head lice in a sensitive and confidential manner. We are committed to the above responsibilities.

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____