



# PATTERSON LAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## HEAD LICE POLICY

### RATIONALE

Most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time and while parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents and students. Our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

### AIMS

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure effective processes for treating head lice are well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice and their treatment.

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### Definition of Head Lice

Pediculosis or 'head lice' are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They cannot transmit any infectious diseases. Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person, where head lice crawl from head to head.

- Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information through the newsletter, by offering a screening process for students and classes where there appears to be a reinfestation, and by alerting parents of lice when detected.
- The school Principal will ensure all teachers and aides are provided with professional development regarding head lice, who will then be authorised to carry out visual checks of students heads for head lice (observations without touching of the students head or hair).
- The school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be inspected (by our specific staff members for the presence of head lice). Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.
- Where there is evidence of eggs or live head lice, parents/guardians will be confidentially notified in writing indicating to parents the results of the inspection, as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- Consistent with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, the Principal (or nominee) will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced. The Principal (or nominee) will provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must indicate that appropriate treatment has commenced. All excluded children to undergo another inspection from our trained head lice inspectors upon recommencement of school.
- The Principal (or nominee) will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy infestations.
- The Principal (or nominee) must alert parents/guardians of an infestation, particularly the parents/guardians of other students in the same class as the affected child/children.

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

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice on a regular basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method;
- Your child does not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2009);
- Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary;
- Parents/Carers will notify the school if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced (in accordance with Health Infectious Disease Regulations 2009);
- Children with long hair will attend school with hair tied back;

- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

### **Head Lice Inspections**

There is no requirement for any school to undertake 'head-lice inspection' programs however, to try and limit the spread of head-lice throughout the school, Patterson Lakes Primary School will conduct head-lice inspections of classes when there is a known occurrence of head-lice within that class.

### **Exclusion From School**

When a student is identified with live head lice schools must:

- At the end of the school day, provide the student with a note to take home to inform their parent/carer that their child may have head lice.
- Exclude the student from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, School Exclusion Table — refer to the health.vic website: School Exclusion Table.

Note 1: the principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school

Note 2: the presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice)

Note 3: there is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for the child to return to school

Principals must:

- alert parents or carers of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child or children
- use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation

Note: the Department of Health and Human Services indicates there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools at any given time, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

### **In conducting Head Lice inspections Patterson Lakes Primary School will:**

- Ensure that any person undertaking 'head lice inspections' will adhere to the school policy and latest Department of Human Services information and Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2009;
- Only inspect the heads of children whose parents have given prior consent;
- Develop a generic/blanket consent form which parents sign at commencement of school year;

### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's one year review cycle.

### **REFERENCES**

This school policy draws on information obtained from the:

*Head lice Management Toolkit* published by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/health/headlice/default.htm>

Treating and controlling head lice pamphlet produced by the Victorian Government of Human Services, Public Health Group <http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Treating-and-controllingheadlice>

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm>

For further information please consult the websites:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/regulations.htm>

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

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

### **CERTIFICATION**

This policy was ratified at the School Council meeting held at Patterson Lakes Primary School on February 24th, 2021.

Last Updated: February 2021