

Head Lice Policy

It is the policy of the School District of Bonduel to maintain appropriate health standards for the school environment. The management of head lice infestation should not unnecessarily disrupt the educational process. This policy is set forth to standardize procedures used by school staff in the prevention and control of head lice.

Head lice infestations are very common among school age children. In accordance with current evidence and recommendations, this policy shall focus on the exclusion of students with active head lice infestations only. There is no current scientific evidence that supports classroom or school-wide screening for decreasing the incidence of head lice among school aged children, or no-nit policies that require a student to be free of nits before returning to school. An active infestation is defined as the presence of live lice or louse eggs (nits) found within 1/4" of the scalp.

The nurse serving the school district shall assist in procedure development to support this policy.

References:

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

AAP (American Association of Pediatrics)

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/site/aappolicy/index.xhtml>

NASN (National Association of School Nurses)

<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/smid/824/ArticleID/40/Default.aspx>

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Head Lice Procedures

Role of Nurse serving the school

1. Maintain current knowledge on spread, prevention, and treatment of head lice infestations.
2. Assist in policy development and review.
3. Prepare educational handouts for families on the identification, transmission, and prevention of head lice. This shall also include letters to notify families that their child has been diagnosed with head lice, or potentially exposed to head lice.
4. Provide evidence based training regarding screening, treatment, and recordkeeping for school staff.
5. Coordinate follow up with students / families with recurrent and chronic head lice infestations.

Screening

Head lice screening will be done by trained school staff. Any student may be checked if displaying symptoms of head lice such as frequent head scratching or if a staff member observes live lice or nits on a student. Checking siblings and close contacts of a case of head lice has also been shown to be an efficient and conclusive way to track lice.

Disposable gloves or wooded stick tools may be used by personnel to avoid direct contact with a child's hair during screening. (It is not necessary to change gloves between students unless there is a visible skin infection or active case of head lice on the scalp)

An active head lice infestation is diagnosed if there are visible live lice on the scalp (tan to grayish-white, wingless insects) or nits cemented within ¼" of the scalp (grayish-white, very small, and oval shaped). Avoid confusing nits with dandruff or other hair debris that can be easily dislodged. Nits that are beyond ¼" of the scalp are likely empty casings or no longer viable, so students with nits farther out on the scalp should be allowed in school.

When an active head lice infestation is confirmed

Most students diagnosed with head lice do not need to be excluded from school immediately, but may remain in school until the end of the school day. The infestation may have already been present for several days or weeks. The student should be allowed to ride the bus home, as transmission via school bus seats is unlikely. In the school, the student should be restricted from close contact activities; therefore, it may be preferable for very young students to be excluded from school immediately.

School staff will contact student's family, verbally if possible, for treatment of the student at home. The parent may pick the student up from school during the day if preferred. Staff will maintain confidentiality of information. Staff shall discuss the confirmation of live lice or nits,

treatment options, environmental cleaning, and student's return to school after treatment. Written instructions will also be offered to parent.

Information should be sent home notifying classmates' families of the suspected case of head lice, asking them to check their own children and discussing diagnosis and treatment.

Exclusion from and return to school

Once treatment (including lice killing shampoo, removal of nits, and change into clothing that has been washed in hot water or machine dried on hot setting) has been done, the student should be promptly returned to school. This may occur as soon as the same day if possible. Students should not miss more than one day of school due to head lice. Families should continue to remove any nits that are close to the scalp, and continue frequent checks to detect new lice.

A student returning to school should report with parent and / or a note describing treatment. The student shall be rechecked by school staff; there should be visible evidence of treatment, including absence of any live lice as well as reduction in the number of nits and / or increased distance from the scalp of any remaining nits.

Families will be re-contacted for additional treatment if a student has recurrent and / or chronic live head lice or nits close to the scalp. These cases will be evaluated and coordinated by designated school staff, nurse serving the school, or the family's medical provider.

Cleaning the school environment

The following measures will be used at district schools when head lice infestations are identified:

- 1.) Floors, rugs, upholstered furniture only needs to be vacuumed if students have direct contact with them. There is no need to discard the vacuum bag after cleaning, except for aesthetic purposes.
- 2.) Clothes or stuffed toys worn or handled by a student within two days before diagnosis, should be washed in hot water, or machine dried at the hottest setting for at least 20 minutes.
- 3.) Other articles may be sealed in plastic bags for at least ten days.
- 4.) Combs and brushes used on affected persons should be immersed in hot water, rubbing alcohol, or a pediculocide for one hour.
- 5.) It is not recommended to hire an exterminator to treat the school.
- 6.) Spraying or fogging school with insecticides or pediculocides is not recommended, and may be harmful.

Preventing the spread of head lice in schools

In addition to family education materials above, the following preventive measures are used at this school:

- 1.) Storing each child's possessions, towels, smocks, and gym clothing in individual cubbies / lockers, whenever possible.
- 2.) Teaching students to hang coats separately—placing hats / gloves in sleeves of coats.
- 3.) Teaching children not to share clothing, hats, helmets, hair decorations, or personal grooming items.
- 4.) Shared headgear such as headphones and helmets should be cleaned and disinfected with rubbing alcohol or disinfectant as needed.
- 5.) Extra hats made available for students in winter months should not be shared.