



HEAD LICE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Trafalgar High School on (03) 5633 1733

RATIONALE:

- Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.
- 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.

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:

- Schools will obtain informed written consent of parents/guardians prior to students being inspected for head lice.
- 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 and by alerting parents of lice when detected.

Parent/guardian consent:

- A pro forma consent form will be provided to parents for completion as part of enrolment, which obtains parent/guardian consent to head lice inspections. The consent applies for the duration the child is at the school. The proforma will be updated when:
 - Guardianship or custody arrangements change for the student.
 - Parents/guardians no longer wish to consent to inspections.

Visual headlice checks:

Visual checks without physical contact:

- Don't require parent/guardian consent.



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- Are made by people authorised by the Principal (e.g. classroom teachers).

Head lice inspections involving the examination of a student:

- Require written parental consent, usually obtained at enrolment.
- Are made by people authorised by the Principal and school council (e.g. school nurse)

Exclusion of students

Students identified with live head lice should be:

- Provided with a note to take home to inform the parent/carer that their child may have head lice at the conclusion of the school day.
- Excluded from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table.

Note 1: 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. 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.

Detection and treatment responsibilities

Responsibilities for managing head lice are shared between: parents/guardians, schools and principals. Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for detection and treatment of head lice and should regularly check for lice or eggs in the hair of:

- Their child and all household members.
- Notify the school if their child is affected.
- When treatment commenced.
- Not send their children to school with untreated head lice.

Schools must:

- Exercise sensitivity towards students and families with head lice.
- Maintain student confidentiality to avoid stigmatisation.
- Support and provide practical treatment advice to parents/guardians.

Principals must:

- Alert parents/guardians of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child/children.
- Use discretion about informing the school community about an infestation. The principal (or nominee) will provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention. A letter will be sent to the families of the year level concerned to maintain privacy. (Appendix A)



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- Exclude infected students until the day after treatment has commenced.

Note:

The Department of Human Services don't advocate that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice is detected.

REFERENCES

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/headlice.aspx>

Related legislation

- Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

APPENDIX A – Example School Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

It has come to my attention that some students in the school may have head lice and I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair **tonight or as soon as possible**.

Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice.

You may be reassured to know that head lice are commonly found in places other than at ## HIGH SCHOOL ##, and they are common in school aged children.

What can you do?

I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair and in those instances where head lice or eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

Please see the attached pamphlet Treating and Controlling Head Lice, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

How do I treat my child for head lice?

The attached pamphlet (as noted above) has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

If head lice or eggs are found on your child's hair you need to inform:

- The school and advise when the treatment has started,
- Parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.



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When can my child return to school?

Health regulations requires that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note, this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

HIGH SCHOOL ## is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Yours Sincerely,

##



Principal

Fact Sheet:

Follow this link:

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/treating-and-controlling-headlice>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	14/09/2022	
Approved by	 Signed: School Council President Tanya Megaw	 Signed: Acting Principal Brett Pedlow
Next scheduled review date	14/09/2026	