

Sacramento City Unified School District

Head Lice Procedure

Health Services would like to remind parents to periodically check their children for head lice. Head lice are not uncommon in school settings, but studies have shown that lice are **NOT** highly transferable in the school setting. Below is helpful information to learn about head lice:

1. What to look for:

- Itching of the scalp that does not go away
- Small whitish eggs (nits) attached to individual hairs that are difficult or impossible to remove. Be careful not to confuse the nits with dandruff or hair spray droplets that can be brushed off the hair.
- Tiny brownish bugs (lice) that are usually found close to the scalp, which are flat in shape, measure 1/10 to 1/8 inch in length and have short, thick legs. The bugs can move quickly, but do not jump or fly.

2. How head lice are spread;

- By **direct** head to head contact with a person who has **live** head lice; not from the nits
- By sharing personal items such as combs, brushes, hair accessories, hats, scarves, jackets, sweaters, towels, sheets, pillowcases, blankets, etc

3. How a case of head lice is treated:

- By using over the counter and prescription rinses and shampoos.
- Removal of all nits. This is very important and you should inspect your child's hair everyday for 1-2 weeks to ensure that all nits are removed.
- It is necessary to repeat the treatment in 7-10 days.

4. How to attend to the environment:

- Wash or dry clean all recently worn clothes and bed linens. Remember to include hats, scarves, gloves, mittens and hair accessories.
- Whenever possible, place items in a clothes dryer at high heat for 20 minutes.
- Clean combs and brushes by soaking in hot water (130 degrees), soapy water and lice control product solution for 10 minutes, then scrubbing with an old toothbrush.
- Vacuum rugs, upholstered furniture, mattresses, car seats and cars.
- Check all household members/contacts, but only treat them if they have lice. Do not treat as a precaution.
- Pets are NOT carriers of head lice.

HEAD LICE Procedure While the majority of children will never encounter head lice, and head lice do not transmit disease, head lice continue to cause anxiety in parents of school-aged children. A growing body of research challenges past practices that are now known to be ineffective. Despite the new research, Sacramento City Unified School District has been sensitive to the anxiety that parents encounter and therefore has the following procedure for dealing with head lice. While school personnel will continue to investigate and check children as needed, parents have the primary role. Please review the information:

Sacramento City Unified School District will follow this procedure:

1. A child will be checked by office manager or designee as needed or as referred by a teacher preferably during non-instructional time.
2. If head lice or nits are found on a child at school
 - The parent/guardian will be contacted
 - Children will be allowed to remain at school until the end of the school day with instructions to treat the lice and home environment that evening and instructions to NOT share sweaters, scarves, hats, etc.
 - Siblings or close contacts in the classroom will be checked as referred by the classroom teacher only if they are exhibiting symptoms such as visible nits or lice, scalp itching and/or irritation. Whole classrooms will NOT be checked.
 - An Exposure Letter will be sent home with students in that classroom **at the discretion of the Principal**, usually only **after several cases are reported** in one classroom **or** as an alternative as a way to notify parents of known close contacts.
3. Children may return to school the next day after treatment.

Procedure when a child returns to school:

- School personnel will check the child's head
- If there are no live lice, the child will be sent to class
- If there are live lice noted, the parent should be contacted to make sure treatment was initiated and Parents are advised to repeat the Combing Procedure from the night before. Using a lice comb and wetting the hair (using crème rinse for longer hair) and comb and pick out lice and nits. This can take many hours for student with lots of long hair. Retreatment with Lice Shampoo cannot be done for another 7-10 days.
- If nits are found by school personnel, the family should be contacted and asked to use the lice comb and retreat with a Head Lice product again within 7-10 days.
- If any student has head lice on three occasions during one school year as determined by school personnel, Health Services will be notified of the recurring problem of head lice with that student, a school nurse will contact family to determine treatment. If treatment was deemed adequate, families will be referred to their Primary Care Providers for prescription strength lice products.
- If a child is again determined to have lice, a report may be filed with County Social Services.

Preserving the confidentiality of each student/family is mandated. Classroom or school-wide screening is currently discouraged. Screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children are or will be infested, and screening for live lice has not been proven to have significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community over time*. School screenings cannot take the place of more careful parental checks*. It is the parent's responsibility, as with other conditions, to be aware of their child's needs and seek the necessary care. If information or resources are needed, please contact school health services or your family care provider.

The following websites provide details about head lice treatment and management that is based on current research and data.

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/5/e1355>

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Updates-Treatments-for-Head-Lice.aspx>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

National Association of School Nurses

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

California Association of School Boards

<https://www.csba.org/>