

# policy HEADLICE

## RATIONALE

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be eradicated.

Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and by sharing personal items such as combs, brushes and head gear such as hats.

## AIMS

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice.
- To be proactive and supportive of parents in the treatment of head lice.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In response to the ongoing problem of head lice in schools, Sunshine Primary School Council has developed a procedure to effectively manage infestations as they occur.

- Pro forma consent form to conduct head lice inspections to cover the duration of the student's schooling.
- Authorised staff will inspect the hair of all children in a class when needed.
- If a child with live lice is discovered parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child from school.
- Any child with eggs will receive a letter to take home requesting that the eggs be treated and removed.
- Children returning after parents have been contacted need to be free of lice and eggs and will be checked by authorised staff before returning to their class.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- To report any infestations to the Class Teacher, Office or Principal.
- To control the spread of head lice by checking hair regularly and adopting the recommended treatments if necessary.
- Exclude their children from school when an infestation occurs until live lice or eggs are no longer present.
- Educate their children about why personal items should not be shared.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF/SCHOOL

- Staff members suspecting that a child has head lice, are to report their concerns to the Principal who will arrange to inspect the child's hair. If suspicion is confirmed, the principal will ensure that the parents of any infected child are contacted as soon as possible.
- The principal or delegate will provide parents of infected children, information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- The principal 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 outbreaks.
- To minimise the risk of transfer through educating students about head lice and encouraging students not to share personal items.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed periodically.

Ref: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>. Dept of Human Services (Disease Control Section) phone: 9637 4000

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