

## **Protocol for Pediculosis**

### **Definition:**

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the human scalp and feed on human blood. Lice do not hop, jump or fly; they crawl. They are simply a nuisance. Head lice do NOT carry disease and are not a sign of poor hygiene. They are spread by close head to head contact. The human head is the only place that head lice can live and survive.

### **Screening:**

1. Students may be referred by the teacher because of scratching the scalp.
2. Classmates and siblings of a new case will be screened within 2 school days.
3. A disposable applicator will be used for each student.
4. Usually there are 5-10 lice on one head. Nits (eggs) are easier to find than lice. Nits are attached to the hair shaft and do not move. Newly laid nits are 1mm (1/8inch) from the scalp. The empty egg casings remain on the hair shaft as it grows. Look for signs of irritation or sores on the scalp from scratching.

### **Management:**

1. Notify the parent. A student with LIVE lice will be sent home. Educate the parents on the requirements of shampooing and nit removal, using verbal and written instructions.
2. A general letter will be sent home with the classroom students to inform all parents of the occurrence.
3. Request the shampoo label or box top be sent in with the student
4. Recheck the student before returning to class after treatment.

### **Treatment:**

1. Non prescription lice shampoos kill lice but not all nits. Shampoos must be used exactly as directed. Some shampoos must be used on dry hair that has not been previously conditioned. Water triggers lice to close their breathing apparatus and weakens the shampoo. Conditioners coat and protect the lice and nits.
2. Recheck the student in 7-10 days
3. Encourage parent to remove nits.
4. Students who have completed 2 complete cycles of treatment (2 shampoos each) or who show no signs of improvement should report to their health care provider. Documentation is required upon return.

**Education for Parents:**

1. Provide parents with instructions.
2. All members of the household and close contacts; including recent sleepover friends should be checked for lice.
3. Those with live lice or nits within 1cm (1/4 inch) of scalp should be treated.
4. Recheck child for lice and nits daily for 2 weeks.
5. Wash bedding, night clothes, and hats etc. in hot water (130 degrees)
6. Un-washable items should be stored in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
7. Soak combs and brushes in 130 degree water or soak in Pediculosis shampoo.
8. Vacuum furniture and rugs.

**School Environment:**

1. Educate children regarding no head –to-head contact including sharing of brushes, combs or head gear.
2. Encourage placing hats in the sleeve for storage.
3. Keep coats separate by hanging on separate hooks.