
Head Lice Policy

In Queensland, headlice infestation may affect people of any age, nationality, gender or socio-economic status. It is as much a social issue as a health or educational issue, and the way that it is approached can have significant influence on a student's emotional, social and educational development. Head lice do not pose any serious health risks but they can be difficult to manage. Schools have a responsibility for minimising risk to school community members of being affected by head lice while at schools, but parents have responsibility for prevention, detection and treatment of head lice among their own children. Schools should utilise the following guidelines, adapted from guidelines developed by Education Queensland, for minimising the presence of head lice at school and managing head lice incidents. Further information in treating head lice is available from [Queensland Health](#).

PREVENTION

Control of head lice is a community issue that can be productively addressed only through a cooperative approach between parents, students and the school. Queensland Health or other local health service providers may also be approached for assistance.

Expectations of Schools

To help control head lice, it is reasonable to expect that schools, through the leadership of the Principal, will:

- At the beginning of the school year or more frequently if required, distribute the school's procedures and information on the prevention, detection and treatment of head lice to parents and staff; and the need for parent vigilance during periods of heavy lice infestation
- Instruct the classroom teachers to inform the principal immediately of possible outbreaks in their classroom
- Implement classroom organisation and teaching programs, as well as guidelines for play, that minimise head-to-head contact during outbreaks of head lice
- Support and encourage parents appropriately through practical advice and a sympathetic attitude to avoid stigmatising families who have difficulty complying with prevention and treatment measures, and
- Request parents not to send children with head lice to school until the day after treatment has commenced (This is in accordance with the recommended minimum exclusion period by Queensland Health in the "Time Out" Exclusion periods)

Expectations of Parents

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children do not attend school with untreated head lice. To achieve this, it is reasonable to expect that the parents will

- regularly inspect their child's scalp and hair to detect the presence of lice or lice eggs
- regularly inspect all household members and treat them if required, and
- notify the school if their child is affected, and advise when treatment had begun

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DETECTION

It is considered the prime responsibility of parents to detect and treat head lice.

There is no general expectation that schools will physically check students for the presence of head lice. However, if the principal suspects the presence of head lice at school and determines that physically checking students would be an effective part of a head lice control strategy, then staff members or other willing adults authorised by the principal may physically check for head lice only if:

- the parent does not object
- the student agrees
- infection control guidelines are observed and
- student privacy is respected at all times

TREATMENT

As outlined above, it is the parents' responsibility to treat head lice. Current information on recommended treatment is available from the local pharmacy, doctor or Queensland Health website