

# HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT

Head lice cause concern and frustration for some parents/guardians/carers, teachers and children. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the control and management of head lice infections is a shared responsibility amongst a number of agencies, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; Department of Human Services; schools and parents. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is responsible for providing advice and support to schools regarding head lice management.

This document outlines the:

- Responsibilities of both the school and the parent/guardian/carer;
- Importance of an all inclusive health approach, to ensure an appropriate and efficient solution to the problem of head lice.

## Responsibilities

**Parent/Guardian/Carer** - responsibilities include:

- Regularly (preferably once a week) inspecting their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspecting all household members and then treating them if necessary.
- Ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice or live lice in their hair.
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk.
- Notifying the school if their child is affected and advising the school when the treatment has started.
- Notifying parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

**School** - responsibilities include:

- Distributing policies and information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians/carers and staff and having accessible clear protocols for the inspection program that the school implements.
- Developing a school policy on head lice which reinforces an accurate, consistent approach to the management of head lice infections, which is approved by the school council.
- Obtaining written parental consent to conduct head lice inspections, upon the enrolment of a student to cover the duration of their schooling at a particular school and to nominate a trained person/s to conduct the head lice inspections, who is approved by the Principal and school council.
- Encouraging those person's authorised by the school principal, e.g. teacher, to visually check a student's hair, i.e. with no physical contact with the child, if the presence of head lice is suspected.
- Encouraging parents/guardians/carers to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child for head lice and providing a sympathetic attitude and practical advice to those parents experiencing difficulty with the control measures.
- Encouraging students to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue.
- Being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from a school rests with the principal or person in charge of the school and being aware that exclusion only refers to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs; and being aware of the recommendation that students should be excluded from school at the conclusion of the school day where the student should be provided with a note to take home to inform the parent that their child may have head lice.
- Being aware that there is no requirement in the *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001* for a child treated for head lice to obtain a clearance certificate to be issued either by a general practitioner or a municipal council, on return to school.
- Where appropriate, and at the principal's discretion, providing an alert notice to the school community, when head lice has been detected in the school.
- Encouraging parents/guardians/carers to identify treatment used and the commencement date.