

## HEAD LICE POLICY

### Purpose

To ensure that outbreaks of head lice are minimized at Canadian Lead Primary School.

To ensure that the Canadian Lead Primary School community is aware of the processes for minimizing and responding to outbreaks of head lice.

Primary responsibility for the control of infectious diseases, including head lice lies with families and public health experts. While parents have the main responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools can assist with controlling and preventing the spread of head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

### Scope

This policy applies to all students at Canadian Lead Primary School.

### Implementation

#### **Head lice checks**

There is no requirement for schools to undertake head lice inspection programs. However, if schools wish to do so, they can conduct visual checks only without physical contact, which do not require parent/guardian consent and are made by people authorised by the Principal, e.g. classroom teachers.

Canadian Lead Primary School will have a head-lice check program, involving the physical examination of students.

- Checks will be made by people authorised by the Principal e.g. teaching staff or ES staff.
- Checks where the hair is moved will require written parental consent.
- Checks where the hair is not moved (i.e. simply looking at a child's head) do not require written parental consent.
- Checks will be conducted in a respectful, sensitive way, maintaining student confidentiality.
- Checks will be conducted with classes of students according to a rotation e.g. one class per week although this will be managed at a school level. Units may be checked at the one time depending on the school timetable and resources.
- All students will be provided with a note explaining they have had a head lice check that day.
- Parents/carers of those students with eggs or live lice will receive a phone call. This will not be indicated on the note going home.
- Only those students with live lice will be excluded from school until they have been treated.
- Presence of eggs does not indicate live lice, as students may have already been treated and the visible eggs can be old eggs. However parents/carers will still be communicated with so they can check their child's hair.
- If live lice are found in a child's hair, parents/carers must treat their child's hair and on returning to school send in a treatment slip indicating when this treatment occurred.

#### **Exclusion from school**

The presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice). The Principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school. There is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for a child to return to school.

When a student is identified with **live** head lice Canadian Lead Primary School will:

- Contact the parent/carer via phone. The student does not have to leave school immediately if this is not practical.

- Exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, School Exclusion Table. Students can recommence school immediately after treatment (e.g. if they are treated in the morning they can come to school in the afternoon).

**Parent consent**

Parent consent:

- Will be given once for head lice checks in which a child’s hair is moved and this covers a child’s enrolment at CLPS.
- Is not required for visual checks where a teacher or ES simply looks at a child’s hair.
- Will be updated when guardianship or custody arrangements change for a student.
- Can be withdrawn if parents/carers no longer wish to consent to inspections.

**Parent/carer responsibilities**

Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.

Responsibilities include:

- Not sending their children to school with untreated head lice.
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk.
- Regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members.
- Notifying the school if their child has had lice and when treatment commenced.
- Treating their child when notified by the school that their child has live lice and returning the completed treatment slip.

Parents/carers will be strongly encouraged to tie their child's hair back if it is long.

**Prevention of head lice in schools**

Although responsibility for detecting and treating head lice rests with parents, it is important that practical advice and support be available in schools. Canadian Lead Primary School will:

- Provide general information regarding head lice in the school newsletter, or on the school website for parent reference.
- Alert parents/carers of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class/unit as the affected child/children via the schools Seesaw platform.
- Use discretion to avoid identifying students when informing the school community about an outbreak.

**Related legislation**

Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001

**General information**

The Department of Health and Human Services indicates at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools, so it is not advocated that the Principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected. Head lice do not live or breed on furniture, carpets, clothes or soft toys and cannot be spread through sharing classroom items. Classrooms do not need additional cleaning during outbreaks of head lice.

The school will incorporate learning activities focused on prevention of head lice into the curriculum to encourage children to learn about head lice to help remove any stigma or misinformation.

**Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier as required.

Signed: Susan Knight  
Principal  


Signed:  
School Council President

Sophie Akers

This policy was reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in:	NA
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This policy was ratified by School Council in:	June 2020
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## HEAD LICE CHECK SCHOOL ROUTINE

The checking routine will be as follows:

1. Each class will be checked at least once a term.
2. All children in a class will take part.
3. Children will be checked by a member of staff delegated by the Principal.
4. All children will have a visual check.
5. Only those with parental permission will have a physical check where a disposable bamboo stick will be used to lift and move hair to allow for a thorough inspection.
6. All children will receive a slip letting their parents/carers know their hair has been checked that day.
7. Parents/carers of children with live lice in their hair or eggs will receive a phone call to inform them of the need to:
  - Continue checking themselves in the presence of eggs;
  - Treat their child's hair in the presence of live lice.
8. Children with live lice must be treated before they can return to school. Parents/carers must provide a note confirming that they have treated their child's hair.
9. Children with live lice can remain in class for the rest of the day unless it is practical for their parent/carer to collect them. This is also recommended in the case of a severe infestation of lice.
10. The school will inform parents/carers of all students in a class if there is an outbreak of live lice in a child's hair. This will be done in a way to avoid stigma and maintain confidentiality.

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Your child's hair was checked for head lice at CLPS today by a staff member delegated by the Principal.

Kind Regards,

Ms. Sue Knight, Principal

**HEAD LICE CHECK PERMISSION FORM**  
**CANADIAN LEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Canadian Lead Primary School is committed to reducing the outbreaks of head lice which are an issue in many primary schools. We are introducing a routine of head lice checks, which will involve staff moving children’s hair to check thoroughly for live lice.

To eliminate head lice from our school we need as many students as possible to be a part of this checking routine. These checks will be carried out in a completely separate area, outside the classroom, to maintain children’s privacy. Schools do NOT need parent/carer permission to carry out visual checks.

Parent/carer permission IS needed for checks where a child’s hair will be touched and moved.

This will be carried out using disposable bamboo sticks, so hair can be lifted and areas where lice commonly hide (e.g. around the ears) thoroughly checked. Visual checks are not always accurate as lice are often not found on the top of a child’s head.

Teachers and ES staff, including the Principal, will be responsible for carrying out these checks.

If live lice or eggs are found in your child’s hair, you will receive a phone call.

All children who have been checked will receive a slip indicating they have taken part in the school head lice checking program.

Your child’s hair must be treated before they can return to school if live lice are found.

If you have any questions or need any further information, please contact Ms. Knight via the school office.

Canadian Lead Primary School’s updated Head Lice Policy is now available on the school website. Please read this so you are fully informed of our schools proactive approach to head lice.

To help us eradicate head lice from our school please sign and return the slip below.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Kind Regards

Ms. Sue Knight

Principal

Canadian Lead PS

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**HEAD LICE CHECK PERMISSION FORM**  
**CANADIAN LEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Parent/Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child/ren’s Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for my child/ren to take part in the Canadian Lead Primary School’s head lice checks program, where children’s hair will be touched and moved for thorough checking. Each class will have their hair checked once per term, or more regularly during outbreaks if required.

Parent/Carer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **INFORMATION FROM BETTER HEALTH CHANNEL**

### **Summary**

Head lice are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They do not generally carry or transmit disease. Head lice have existed for millions of years and, in fact, predate human evolution.

Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person. Lice will crawl from head to head without discrimination.

### **Head lice facts**

A female louse lays three to eight eggs (nits) per day. The eggs are firmly attached to the hair fibres, within 1.5 cm of the scalp, and rely on warmth from the head to hatch. Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs, so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl. People catch head lice from direct head-to-head contact with another person who has head lice. This can happen when people play or work closely together. Head lice are most common among children and their families. If your family has head lice, tell anyone who has had head-to-head contact with them, so that they can check and treat their family if needed. There is no need to treat the whole family, unless they also have head lice. Concentrate on treating the affected person's head. There is no evidence to suggest that you need to clean the house or the classroom. The only linen that requires changing is the affected person's pillowcase. Wash it in hot water (60 °C) or dry it in a clothes dryer set to warm or hot.

Itchiness may not disappear immediately after treatment. Persistent itch without evidence of persistent infection is not a reason to repeat the treatment. There are other reasons why your scalp might feel itchy.

### **Finding head lice**

Some people who have a head lice infestation do not itch. It is possible to have head lice and not feel the need to scratch your head. This means that absence of itch is not a reliable sign that you do not have head lice. If you suspect someone might have been exposed to head lice you will need to closely inspect that person's hair and scalp.

So what are you looking for? Head lice eggs are oval, and the size of a pinhead. They are firmly attached to the hair shaft and cannot be brushed off. (A live egg will make a 'pop' sound if you crush it between your fingernails.)

A louse is a small, wingless, whitish-brown to reddish-brown insect. They have six legs, which end in a claw. Like this:  
The easiest and most effective way to find head lice is to use the conditioner and comb treatment weekly.

This includes: Step 1. Comb hair conditioner onto dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This makes it difficult for lice to grip the hair or run around. Step 2. Thoroughly comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth head lice comb.

Step 3. Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.

Step 4. Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.

Step 5. Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least four or five times.

Step 6. If lice or eggs are found, the person should be treated.

Note: If the person has been treated recently and only hatched eggs are found, you may not have to treat them again, since the eggs could be from the old infection. A hatched egg looks like an egg with its top cut off.

### **Treatment for head lice**

The two preferred treatment options available for initially treating head lice are the 'conditioner and comb' method, and the use of an insecticide.

### **Using insecticide products**

Any head lice treatment product you choose should carry an Australian Registered (AUST R) or Australian Listed (AUST L) number on the outer packaging. These numbers show that the product is accepted by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for supply in Australia.

If you use a lotion, apply the product to dry hair. For shampoo products, wet the hair, but use as little water as possible. Head lice live in the hair and go to the scalp to feed. Therefore, head lice products must be applied to all parts

of the hair.

Once the treatment has been done according to the instructions on the packet, comb through the hair again with the fine tooth head lice comb. This will help to remove the dead eggs and lice, and possibly any eggs still living. This is also a good time to check whether the removed lice have been killed by the treatment or are still alive. (If they are still alive this probably means that they are resistant to the insecticide.)

Care should be taken when using head lice treatment products:

- if you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- in children less than 12 months old
- in people who have allergies, open wounds on the scalp, or asthma.

All products can cause reactions. If you are unsure, check with your pharmacist or doctor.

No topical insecticide treatment kills 100 per cent of the eggs, so treatment must involve two applications, seven days apart. (This kills the lice that hatched from the eggs that didn't die the first time around.)

If you choose not to use an insecticide, the comb and conditioner method described above can be used every second day until no live lice have been found for 10 days.

### **Insecticide resistance**

Insecticide resistance is common, so you need to check that the lice you comb out are dead. If the insecticide has worked, the lice will be dead within 20 minutes. If the lice are not dead, the treatment has not worked and the lice are resistant to the product and all products containing the same active compound.

If a product has not worked for you, you can try another, or speak to your pharmacist or doctor.

### **Treatment failures**

If the initial treatments have failed and live lice are still being removed with the conditioner and comb treatment, see your doctor for a referral to a dermatologist for specialist treatment. A dermatologist may prescribe ivermectin. This is a tablet taken twice, seven days apart. It is highly effective in treating head lice.

### **Head lice combs**

Head lice combs with long rounded stainless steel teeth, positioned very close together, are the most effective. However, any head lice comb can be used. A plastic head lice comb is often provided when you buy a head lice insecticide product (in the packet with the shampoo or lotion).

### **Head lice and exclusion from school**

According to the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009, children with untreated head lice are not permitted to attend school or children's service centres. However, once treatment has started, they may attend, even if there are still some eggs present.

### **Preventing head lice**

There is no product available that prevents head lice. However, tying long hair back and checking weekly for lice, using the conditioner and comb method, can help prevent the spread.

### **Where to get help**

Your doctor, Pharmacist, Dermatologist, Local government, health department  
Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services. Victoria Tel. (03) 9096 0000