Head Lice Policy

Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
Standard 2.1 Each child’s health is promoted.
Standard 2.2 Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.
Standard 2.3 Each child is protected.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some families, Educators and children. This policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the service community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst families have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our service community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Responsibilities of Families

It is the expectation of families attending this service that:

- Children’s hair will be checked on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method

- Children do not attend the service with untreated head lice. Children with live lice will be sent home immediately. (Children with only eggs present will be able to attend the service as only live lice are able to spread)

- All household members will regularly be inspected and then treated if necessary. (Families will notify the service if their child is found to have live lice so the service can monitor the number of cases and act responsibly if a high number of cases are reported.)

- Children with long hair will attend the service with their hair tied back

- Families will only use safe and recommended practices to treat head lice

- Families will maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures

- Contact and inform the Service as soon as lice are detected and treatment has started so the Service can monitor cases and act responsibly.

Responsibilities of the Service

To support families and the broader community of the Service to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the service will undertake to:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to families and Educators at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required
- Include information about head lice management in orientation for new families/Educators attending the service

- Include information and updates in service newsletters

- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures

- Exclude a child from the service only if live head lice is detected

- Accept the advice of families that appropriate treatment has commenced

- Record confidentially all cases so an outbreak can be avoided

- Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help them understand the issue

- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required

- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with families of the service especially around issues of head lice and always treat all cases with strict confidentiality

- Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice


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[Signature]

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Head Lice Policy– Australian International Islamic College Kindergarten
Scratching for Answers


Where do head lice come from?

Head lice have been around for thousands of years. As with any insect, they learn to adapt to their environment in order to survive. We are never going to be completely rid of them, but we can make managing them easier.

Do head lice fly or jump?

No, Head lice do not have wings, so cannot fly. They cannot jump as they do not have “knees”.

So how do head lice move around?

Head lice CRAWL very fast and require head to head contact for transmission. It is possible that because of the way young children play, head lice are seen more widely amongst primary school children than adolescents or adults.

Can head lice spread disease?

No. A head lice infection is not a life threatening health condition like similar health

Do head lice live in carpets, clothes, hats or sheets?

No. Head lice very rarely fall from the head. They require blood to survive. Head lice feed 3 to 4 times a day and without blood; will dehydrate in 6 hours in a dry climate and 24 hours in a humid climate. An egg requires warmth to hatch and is the reason why they are laid close to the scalp. The further away from the scalp, the less likely they are to survive.

Is it true that head lice only like clean hair?

No. Head lice are not selective. They don't care if hair is long, short, blonde, brown, washed this morning or last week. As long as they are warm, and have blood to drink, then they are content.

What treatment kills 100% of head lice or eggs?

There is no single treatment that kills 100% of head lice or eggs. Whichever treatment you choose it can take time and persistence to get rid of head lice. Use a method that will not risk the health of your child.
Is there a way to prevent head lice?

Not that we know of. It's important to check your child's head regularly with conditioner even if you think your child has head lice. There is no research to prove that chemical or herbal therapies can prevent head lice.

How does the conditioner and comb method work?

Conditioner does not kill lice, but it does stun them for about 20 minutes, meaning they do not move around, and it is difficult for them to hang on. This gives you time to comb through the hair with a lice comb.

How does a chemical treatment work?

Only use products that are licensed or registered for head lice. There are four different active chemicals that target head lice, each works differently and aim to kill lice and/or eggs.

Do some products work better than others?

Over time, head lice may develop resistance to some chemicals. It is important to check if a treatment you used has worked, and if not, treat again with another product that has a different chemical.

Why do you have to treat again in seven days' time?

Head lice eggs take 6 to 7 days to hatch and days, you are aiming to kill and comb out any lice that have since hatched from eggs, which were missed.

Should I treat everyone in the family?

It is important to check each family member, using conditioner and comb, for head lice but only treat those with live lice.

What should I wash or treat at home?

As head lice only live for a short time off the head, the only extra cleaning needed is to wash the pillowslip on the hot cycle or place in clothes dryer. Head lice combs can be cleaned in water hotter than 60 degrees.

Why does my child keep getting re-infected?

Re-infection is the least likely reason for head lice returning in a week's time. If eggs do not die, or were not removed during the original treatment they may hatch and the lifecycle occurs all over again. To break this lifecycle you must retreat (regardless of
treatment method) seven days after the first treatment and continue with weekly checking.

**Does my child have to miss school?**

According to the *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001*, children with head lice may be readmitted to school after head lice treatment has commenced. A certificate from a doctor or council is not required before your child goes back to school. Children do not catch head lice from school; they catch it from other children when they gather together at schools. Head lice are not the fault of schools.

**Helpful hints...**

1. Using the conditioner and comb method every week is the best way to detect head lice early and minimise the problem.

2. Tying back hair can also help prevent the spread of head lice.

3. Many parents will complain that they are doing the right thing but other parents aren’t. Placing the blame will not achieve anything. Instead of pointing the finger, help each other.

4. A school with a head lice education program and policy in line with Scratching for Answers? Is a proactive school attempting to help families address a common health concern?

**Treatment choices**

- **Chemical**

  Treat and comb to remove the head lice and eggs; and repeat in 7 days

- **Non-chemical**

  Use conditioner and comb to remove the head lice and eggs; and repeat every 2 days until no live lice have been found for 10 days.