



Head Lice Policy

Purpose

To provide the framework for a co-operative approach that supports the early identification and treatment of head lice within the school community.

Context

Head lice is an on-going challenge in Queensland schools. It is very contagious and untreated head lice can become very distracting and upsetting for children who are unable to concentrate in class due to the itchiness of their scalp.

It is critical to identify head lice early and take steps to eliminate it for the comfort of the child and to stop it spreading throughout the class and school. The best outcome is achieved when school staff and parents work in partnership.

Policy

Parents have prime responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice. Parents are expected to:

- a. regularly inspect their child's head to detect the presence of lice or lice eggs;
- b. ensure their children do not attend school with untreated head lice; and
- c. notify the school if their child is affected and advise when treatment has begun.

Where a teacher suspects a child has head lice, the teacher will act promptly, following the agreed procedure. The first step is to request the child go to the office where the child will be privately told they may have head lice. A staff member will inspect the child's head and if head lice is evident (live lice and/or eggs) then the parents will be phoned immediately and asked to collect their child and to treat their child's head.

A general letter of notification will be emailed to the parents of all children in the class, including the child who has been sent home. This letter also outlines Queensland Health's recommended procedure for treating head lice. Assistance will be offered to parents who have difficulty eliminating head lice in their family.

While it is easy for children to get head lice, there can be a stigma attached to it. Mindful of this, any head lice occurrence is to be managed by all parties in a way that is respectful to the sensitivities of the situation and the individual child and their family.