

The ROCORI School District head lice procedure is in accordance with evidence- based practice and is based on recommendations from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses.

Head Lice Information for Schools

The CDC says “students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice”.

Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Both the American Association of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses advocate that “no-nit” policies should be discontinued. “No-nit” policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to schools should be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Many nits are more than ½ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or may in fact be empty shells, also known as casings.
- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel.”

The National Association of School Nurses says “It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses that the management of pediculosis (infestation by head lice) should not disrupt the educational process. No disease is associated head lice, and in-school transmission is considered rare. When transmission occurs, it is generally found among younger-age children with increased head-to-head contact” (Frankowski & Bocchini, 2010).

Children found with live head lice should remain in class, but be discouraged from close direct head contact with others. The school nurse/health tech should contact the parents to discuss treating the child at the conclusion of the school day (Frankowski & Bocchini, 2010). Students with nits only should not be excluded from school (American School Health Association, 2005, Frankowski & Bocchini, 2010, Pollack, Kiszewski & Spielman, 2000), although further monitoring for signs of re-infestation is appropriate. It may be appropriate to screen other

children who have had close head-to-head contact with a student with an active infestation, such as house hold family members, but classroom-wide or school-wide screening is not merited (Andresen &McCarthy, 2009). In cases that involve head lice, as in all school health issues, it is vital that the school nurse prevent stigmatizing and maintain the student's privacy as well as the family's right to confidentiality (Gordon, 2007)."

When a student is found to have live lice:

- The parent is notified by phone if possible and information related to detection and elimination of head lice can be provided at that time or sent home with the student in a sealed envelope.
- The student is allowed to stay in school, unless the parent desires to pick up the student. Confidentiality must be maintained.
- It is appropriate to have the students head checked upon return to school. Parents will be instructed to remove all live lice.
- If nits are found, the parent is notified to keep combing them out with a lice comb at least daily for the next two weeks.
- Follow up checks may be done by trained school staff to confirm lice management efforts.
- Record these head checks in Skyward as an office visit.
- If live lice are found, the process of notification to parents/guardians begins again.

When a student is found to have nits in the hair (no live lice detected):

- The parent is notified by phone if possible and encouraged to comb nits out at least daily for the next two weeks.
- The student is **not** sent home from school.
- Information related to detection and elimination of head lice is sent home with the student in a sealed envelope.
- Record these head checks in Skyward as an office visit, noting that no live lice were found.
- If future checks reveal an increased number of nits present or it is obvious to the screener that the student's hair has not been treated (live lice are present), the parent will be contacted for follow up and support.

Classroom environment:

- A head louse which is on an inanimate object is most likely a dying head louse. The classroom is only one of many environments where head lice can be transmitted.

According to the CDC, most transmissions occur in the home environment (friends, sleepovers, camp, etc.).

- Past practice of separating coats, backpacks, etc. have been found to not be important, as healthy lice do not stray from the head.
- No environmental pesticide treatments (sprays, pesticide bombs) are to be used.
- Encourage students to avoid sharing hats, combs, and pillows; and to avoid head-to-head contact.
- The school Nurse/Health Tech will use professional judgment to determine when unusual measures are necessary to respond to extraordinary cases.
- Full classroom screenings for head lice are **not** done unless deemed necessary by the School Nurse/Health Tech. "Screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children will become infested and screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community over time." (AAP Policy, September 2002).

Notification Procedures:

- Parents will be notified by a letter sent home with their student if there are 2 or more cases of live head lice discovered in the elementary classroom. Because middle school/high school students change classes and are much less likely to have head-to-head contact, a letter will not be sent except as deemed necessary by the school nurse/health tech and building principal.
- In the rare case that a student is to be excluded (see Exclusion Procedures) a notice will be given to the parent in person if possible, and a phone contact will be attempted and documented. If there is concern about the delivery of the notification, it can be sent by certified mail.

Exclusion Procedures:

Note: the presence of severe infestations of untreated head lice can be disruptive to the educational environment.

- On the rare case that a student has either A) chronic head lice infestation or b) severe head lice infestation that is disruptive to the learning environment, the school nurse/health tech will be consulted.
- If in the Nurse/Health Techs professional judgment it is determined that Exclusion needs to be considered the nurse will consult with the building principal about implementing Exclusion. This measure will only be taken with careful consideration.

- With chronic head lice cases the Nurse/Health Tech will obtain the documentation of repeated and unsuccessful head lice management measures (from Lice Log and Skyward Office Visits).
- The parent will be notified as in above Notification Procedures.
- The return of a student after Exclusion will necessitate a head check in the health office with evidence of progress in head lice management. Evidence is elimination of live lice and a decrease in the number of nits.
- It may be appropriate in the judgment of the School Nurse/Health Tech to monitor progress of lice management over a period of time. The goal is to support the family in eradication of this pest.

Documentation:

- All students identified with head lice or nits will have their names and dates the lice/nits were found recorded in a confidential lice log maintained in the health office. The confidential lice log is considered a “working” document, is not FERPA compliant, and should be shredded at the end of the school year.
- If a student is checked in the Health office for head lice that head check is to be documented as an office visit in Skyward.

Tips and Tricks for Head Lice

1. If it's not dirty, don't wash it! It's not the water that kills lice it is the high heat in the dryer. When using the dryer use the highest temperature possible for 40 minutes.
2. Lice can't survive in the extreme heat or extreme cold-if it's really cold outside hang your blankets/linens outside for 6-8 hours.
3. After you have vacuumed or wiped down your furniture, place a sheet over it-at the end of the day throw it into the dryer for 40 minutes and replace.
4. Every morning take pillows/pillowcases that have been slept on and throw them into the dryer for 40 minutes.
5. If your child plays in their closet or drawers and you feel that all the clothes could be contaminated, you could take out 5 days of clothes and tape over drawers/closet so the child does not have access to the clothes. (Lice die after 48 hours without a host)
6. With long hair, try to keep it in pony tails or braids.
7. Inform parents with children that your child plays with frequently. Also inform your child's school
8. Encourage your child not to share any sports gear, hats, combs, wigs, dress up clothes, headphones, or anything else that can come in contact with your head.

Environmental Cleaning

1. Dry all linens, pillowcases, hats and clothes on HIGH HEAT for no less than 40 minutes-or use the outdoors in cold weather conditions, below the freezing point.
2. There are many items that are not machine washable, but need to be treated. The best treatment option is isolation. Tightly bag these items for at least 2 weeks.
3. You can vacuum any surface that cannot be wiped down or washed.
4. Boil hairbrushes/combs for 20 minutes or put in the freezer for at least 23 hours. Do not share hair brushes or combs!

Diagnosed with Head Lice, now what?

1. Check all family members for head lice.
2. Notify those who have been in close contact with the infested person so they can be checking for head lice.
3. Notify the school or daycare they attend.
4. Clean your environment.
5. Persons treated for head lice or nits should be checked for lice and nits EVERYDAY and a thorough comb out with a lice comb should be done to remove any debris from the treatment for 5 days.
6. Do NOT share beds, pillows, hats...etc.

Treatment Options

There are many effective lice treatments. In the past Rid or Nix has been recommended, but we are finding that the lice have become resistant to this treatment. Other good options are: mayo or Cetaphyll lotion applied to hair-this suffocates the live lice-this must be left on scalp with a shower cap for a minimum of 2 hours up to overnight. Then take your Lice Comb (this is a must) and comb through cleaned hair sectioning it off pulling nits off the hair. This is a very LONG process but effective. It should be repeated in 5-7 days. Lice comb hair several times a day. There are products that use essential oils to remove or repel lice-these are safe and effective if done correctly. Vinegar hair rinse is also a good option, pour vinegar on hair and let sit for about 20 minutes then rinse and use conditioner. Use lice comb to comb out all dead lice along with looking for nits. Please ask your school nurse/health tech for more information on these products. It is necessary for parents to continue to do lice checks over the next several weeks. Routine lice checks should be done throughout the school year at home.

