

City of Milford, Connecticut

~ Founded 1639 ~

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MILFORD SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Head lice can be a problem in our community as it is in neighboring communities. Lice are communicable and can be difficult to prevent. If every parent takes the responsibility to check the entire family's hair and scalp often, the spread of these parasitic insects can be controlled.

Lice are small insects, 1 - 3 mm. long, and vary in color. They move quickly by crawling and are difficult to see. Head lice cannot jump or fly. They are not known to transmit disease. The transmission of head lice is most commonly by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Diagnosis is often made on the basis of finding nits (louse eggs.) These are tiny, white, oval-shaped eggs firmly attached to the hair shafts. Nits can be found throughout the hair, but are most often located behind the ears and at the nape of the neck or on the base of the scalp.

Itching is the most common symptom of head lice infestation and is caused by an allergic reaction to louse bites. It may take 4–6 weeks for itching to appear the first time a person has head lice. Children seen scratching their heads frequently should be examined at once. Often red bite marks or scratch marks can be seen on the scalp and neck.

If you discover your child has head lice, do not be embarrassed to notify your child's school nurse so that other parents can be alerted to a possible outbreak of head lice. Also notify the parents of your child's recent playmates. Parental cooperation will help protect all children, including your own.

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. Providing proof of treatment to your school nurse is necessary for school re-entry.

Control measures such as screening an entire classroom for nits and lice have not been shown to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community. As such, the school nurse will screen students upon request of a parent/guardian, school staff or when the student presents to the health office with symptoms suggestive of lice.

It is important to remember that head lice can occur among all socioeconomic groups and is not related to cleanliness of the person or his or her environment.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

If you have any questions, please call your child's school nurse.