



SCHOOL CULTURE, CLIMATE & STUDENT SERVICES

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

After reviewing the latest information from the National Association of School Nurses, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Richmond Public Schools is updating its head lice protocol to minimize the impact of lice on our students and our schools.

Facts about Lice:

- Head lice move by crawling. They cannot fly or hop. They are spread by direct head-to-head contact.
- It is less common, but lice may be spread by sharing personal items such as combs, brushes, hats, scarves, coats, and towels. **Discourage your student from sharing these items.**
- Lice are common and not affected by personal hygiene or cleanliness in homes or schools. Anybody can get lice.
- Lice reproduce by laying white eggs, called nits, which are tightly attached to the hair. It is not likely that nits would transfer from one person to another.

The new head lice protocol is:

- **Students found to have lice:**
 - A student with suspected head lice may be sent to the nurse for an examination. If head lice are found, the student will be allowed to return to class, but told to avoid head-to-head contact or sharing personal items with others. The nurse will contact the student's parent or guardian to explain proper treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to make sure the student is treated.
- **Students found to have nits only:**
 - Students found to have nits only will be allowed to return to the classroom, but told to avoid head-to-head contact or sharing personal items. They may be monitored for future outbreaks.
- **Other Students:**
 - It may be appropriate to screen other students who have had direct contact with the students with lice, such as family members or friends. However, entire classrooms or groups of students will not be screened because it is not an effective tool for fighting lice.

This new protocol will help reduce unnecessary school absences and disruptions to your student's learning. It will not increase your student's chances of getting head lice.

Protocol / Head Lice

When a student is identified as having head lice:

A. Student

1. That student should remain in class, but strongly discouraged from any direct close head contact with other students or sharing personal items that may spread the infection, such as hats, combs, or brushes. The school nurse should contact the student's family to explain proper treatment at the conclusion of the school day as well as provide information about the checking for and identification of live head lice and nits. It is recommended that lice shampoo or crème rinse, i.e. Rid, Nix, Kwell, R&C, A200, etc., is used according to the manufacturer's instructions. The parent should be instructed to thoroughly vacuum the carpets and bedding, and to wash sheets, combs, brushes, and clothing in hot water. All items which cannot be washed should be placed in plastic bags for 2 weeks.
2. Students with live head lice and nits should not be excluded from school, though they should be monitored for future infestations.

B. School

1. Items that have had direct head contact with that student 24-48 hours prior to treatment should be considered for cleaning as lice are unlikely to survive off scalp for longer than this period and nits are unable to hatch at temperatures lower than that near the scalp. Washing, soaking, or drying items at temperatures greater than 130°F will kill stray lice or nits. Furniture, carpeting, and other fabrics or fabric-covered items can be vacuumed. Items that cannot be washed should be placed in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
2. It may be appropriate to screen other students that have had direct contact with the student, such as household members or friends.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). *Head lice information for schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

Frankowski, B.L., & Bocchini, J.A.. (2010). Clinical Report-Head Lice. *Pediatrics*. 126(2) 392-403. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/126/2/392.full.pdf>.
doi:10.1542/peds.2010-1308

National Association of School Nurses (2011). *Pediculosis Management in the School Setting*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasn.org/Portals/0/positions/2011pspediculosis.pdf>.