



Muskogee Public Schools

EVERY HEART... EVERY MIND... EVERY DAY - THE MUSKOGEE WAY!

Muskogee Public School Head Lice Protocol

Your student's hair/scalp was inspected at school today and was found to have evidence of head lice (live bugs). The student will need to be treated this evening and rechecked in the health office tomorrow morning prior to attending school. Please read and follow the information.

Schools can be most helpful by making available accurate information on identification, treatment, and/or prevention of head lice in the school community and with the parent/guardian. Effective management of head lice should result in improved student attendance and decreased concern on the part of parents and school personnel. While head lice are a public health nuisance **they are not a public health threat**. A consistent procedure should assure that all students are treated in a similar manner and reassure parents and staff dealing with head lice in the school setting.

How Does an Infestation Occur?

- Primarily through direct contact with an infested person from sharing personal items such as combs, brushes, and other hair-care items as well as clothing, blankets, pillows, headgear (hats, scarves, football and batting helmets, etc.), ribbons and other head coverings.
- Head lice have no wings and do not fly or jump, but they can run through hair quickly.

MPS Head Lice Procedures

- Active head lice protocols occur only when live lice (bugs) are found on the head. Privacy and confidentiality must be maintained. Nits (lice eggs) do not qualify.
- Students with live head lice will need to go home *as soon as possible* keeping him/her from close contact with others. The parent/guardian should be notified immediately and the child sent home for proper treatment. ****Please refer to Parent Guidelines for your student's return to school procedure.**
- *It will take 7 to 10 days from when the eggs are laid until they hatch.* ****Your child needs to stay home until treatment has occurred and live lice are not seen. Nits are not considered live lice, and screening for nits is not an accurate way to predict head lice infestation.**
- Letters are sent home at the elementary level advising families of cases of head lice in their child's classroom and advising them how to assess for and treat head lice.
- Total class checks are not done due to data privacy issues and the evidence that head lice screening is not effective.
- A student may be referred to the school nurse or health aid for a head check if the teacher or other school staff observes lice or is suspicious that the student may have head lice.
- A student may be checked for head lice at their parent's or their own requests.

Checking a student's scalp for head lice:

- To check a student's head use two cotton swabs and divide the hair, examining the whole head. Use tape to catch and identify lice.

Parent Guidelines/Responsibilities:

- **Check everyone in the household.** Items needed for identification: lice comb, spray bottle with water, pale or white hand towel or disposable absorbent pads, magnifying glass and good lighting. Wet the hair, with the lice comb start at the middle of the front of the scalp and comb down, making sure to raise the comb up towards the hair in order to minimize losing any lice or nits. The hand towel/absorbent pad will help catch any lice or nits that may fall. You may need a magnifying glass to accurately identify lice or nits vs. hair debris.
- **Treat all household members who are infested.** Only treat those in the household that have been found to have live lice or nits within 1 cm of the scalp. Consult with the school nurse, health aide or your physician on the proper treatment for household members.
- **Remove any remaining nits.** Students may return to school with nits but not with live lice. Removing nits will prevent other people from thinking that your child still has untreated lice and lessens the chances of any untreated nits hatching. To remove the nits back-comb the hair with a nit comb. Wetting the hair with water makes removal easier, but avoid using any products that claim they loosen nits as they can lessen the effectiveness of the lice treatment. Continue to nit comb the hair for the next **10 days** to ensure removing any nits that may have survived the lice treatment.
- **Cleaning of the environment.** Exhaustive measures are not beneficial. Lice that are off the body rarely cause re-infestation due to not being able to survive for over 24 hours off the human body. Routine house cleaning, such as vacuuming of floors and furniture and laundering of linens and clothing, is recommended. Spraying of furniture and mattresses with a spray *is not recommended*.
- **Clean only items that have been in contact with the infested person's head in the last 48 hours prior to treatment.** Such items include clothing, headgear, headphones, hair accessories, coats, scarves, furniture, carpeting, rugs, and car seats. Items that are launderable should be machine-washed in hot water (at least 130^o) then placed in a hot dryer for at least 15 minutes.
- **Non-washable items.** Because nymphs need to feed immediately after hatching, it is not necessary to bag nonlaunderable items.
- **Disinfest combs & brushes.** Grooming tools and toiletries should not be shared. Soak hairbrushes and such for 1 hour in a solution containing some anti-lice shampoo. Always inspect and rinse thoroughly before using.
- **Retreat in the appropriate amount of time for lice treatment that was utilized.** Consult the school nurse, health aide or your HCP on when the proper retreatment should take place. Under treatment can cause recurrence of living lice and over treatment can be dangerous to your child. Recurrent or persistent cases of head lice should be referred for medical treatment with the health department or HCP. These cases should be reviewed with regards to misdiagnosis, noncompliance, re-infestation, lack of effectiveness of the product used, or resistant head lice in mind.
- **Check in with the school nurse or person designated by principal to determine if your child can return to school. You should accompany your returning child to school to confirm that your child is clear to stay. If during the check in the morning a live bug is found the child will be sent home and will need to be re-treated. If only nits are found, the child may stay and attend school. Your child will need to be checked for 7 to 10 days from their last treatment to ensure there are no longer live bugs present.**