

Mahwah School District's Recommended Procedure in the Case of Pediculosis

According to the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and under the directive of Everett Schlam, Mahwah School District Physician, the following will stand as the recommended procedure in the case of pediculosis (head lice).

Head lice are a common problem among school age children but are not a health hazard or a sign of uncleanliness and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. For this reason, the Mahwah School District, in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics, no longer recommends immediate exclusion from school for head lice and "no-nit" policies. No healthy child will be excluded or allowed to miss school time because of head lice.

Head Lice do **not** jump or fly, and can only crawl short distances. The usual mode of transmission is through direct head to head contact. Transmission via clothing, hats, furniture and other objects can occur but the likelihood is low because head lice can only live off the host for one to two days. By the time head lice are detectable, they most likely have been living on the host for at least a month therefore immediate exclusion at the time of detection does nothing to control an outbreak, is not medically warranted, and deprives students of valuable education time.

Based on scientific research and the best evidence-based management and treatment options, the school nurse will conduct screenings as needed, of students suspected of lice infestation. Students found to have an infestation will be allowed to remain in school until the end of the school day. The school nurse will notify and give parents information regarding treatment options and encourage them to contact their pediatrician for further guidance. The nurse is also a resource of information regarding the care of items that the student may have come in contact with at home. Additional students may be screened at the discretion of the school nurse. Siblings of student will also be checked, and other schools notified as needed.

The infested child will be allowed to return to school after the first treatment. The child must be inspected by the school nurse prior to re-entry to assure that the treatment has been successfully completed. The child will then be re-checked by the school nurse in 10 to 14 days to assure re-infestation has not occurred.

Should multiple cases of pediculosis be noted in any grade level, the nurse will consult with the school principal and letters will be sent home to parents at their discretion.

If you suspect your child has head lice, please notify the school nurse. In addition, the entire family should be inspected for head lice as well. For information on how to treat your child's head lice infestation consult your family physician, a local pharmacist, or visit the web site <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/treatment.html#>