

209.3-AR-1. Guidance for Evaluation/Control of Pediculosis (lice) in School

The American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of School Nurses and the Center for Disease Control do not support exclusion from school for lice or nits. School nurses remain the best screeners of lice infestations. The following guidelines are based on evidence-based practices and research from these sources. Upon receiving a complaint of lice or upon suspecting an infestation, the school nurse/health room staff will closely examine the scalp of the child. This exam will be done as confidentially as possible.

- It is not necessary to wear gloves. The nurse/health assistant may use pediculosis sticks to help separate the hair.
- It may be necessary to remove hair clips and rubber bands etc. to examine hair. The nape of the neck and the areas behind the ears will be given special attention and the scalp will be checked for signs of irritation.
- The examiner will look closely for lice (active/moving), nymphs (immature lice), and nits no farther than 1/4" from the scalp. These findings indicate an active infestation.
- Contacts (close friends, siblings) will be screened if an active case is found. It is not necessary or advisable to screen the class or the entire school.
- Students found with active lice will be screened following treatment upon returning to school.
- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to contact their health care provider.

If an active infestation is found, every effort will be made to send the child home for treatment. The parent will be given a printed copy of lice treatment instructions. If the child can't be sent home, the child may return to the classroom and participate in classroom activities until the parent arrives and/or dismissal at which time the student will follow their usual dismissal routine. If the student attends day care, every effort will be made to notify the day care staff of the lice concerns. A lice infestation is typically 30 days old when first diagnosed, as it takes time for itching and other symptoms to occur. Repeat infestations generally cause earlier itching and other symptoms.

* Students should be readmitted to school after the first treatment. This is extremely important, as the presence of nits does not indicate an active infestation. Parents will be notified and will be given instructions on nit removal.

Education

- School nurses will have printed lice information available for parents.
- Staff will be given printed lice education materials each school year.
- Parents will be advised not to over treat, and to closely following product instructions.
- The school nurse may elect to address the PTO/PTA or may write a newsletter article to help educate families.