8454 – MANAGEMENT OF PEDICULOSIS

The Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain a healthy learning environment for all children in the school district. One way to maintain this healthy learning environment is to manage pediculosis, a condition of a person having head lice. Head lice are very small insects that have claws that cling to hair and spend their entire life cycle on the heads of people. Head lice do not spread any diseases and having head lice is not prevented by personal or household cleanliness, use of shampoos, or length of hair. All social and economic groups can be affected by head lice. Because it is very difficult to totally prevent head lice infestations in schools where children come into close head-to-head contact with each other frequently, the Board of Education authorizes appropriate steps to manage pediculosis.

A student who is found to have active head lice will not be permitted to attend school until there are no active lice in the student's hair, proof of treatment has been provided to the nurse, and until all live and/or dead head lice are removed from the student's hair as confirmed by an examination by the school nurse.

The presence of nits (the eggs of lice) without active head lice will not prohibit a child from attending school provided proof of treatment has been provided to the nurse and there is no evidence of active head lice in the student's hair.

The Board recognizes parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice and school staff members will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families in managing pediculosis. The school nurse team will compile a Management of Pediculosis Information Packet, which will be sent to parents of children identified with active head lice or nits, and be made available to all parents upon request. The Information Packet will include information about identifying, treating, and managing pediculosis.

If the school nurse determines a student has active head lice or nits, the parent shall be notified by the school nurse as soon as reasonably possible. The parent will be provided a copy of the district's Management of Pediculosis Information Packet and this Policy. The school nurse will advise the parent that prompt treatment of active head lice and/or nits is in the best interest of their child and treatment shall be required before the student can return to school. The school nurse will determine whether to send the child home or have the child remain at school for the remainder of the school day based on the comfort of the child, the degree of the infestation, and the likelihood of the spread of head lice to other students. If the school nurse cannot contact the parent a letter from the school nurse informing the parent of the presence of active head lice or nits will be sent home with the student. In the event the parent cannot be reached on the day it is determined their child has active head lice or nits, the parent will be required to contact the school nurse the next school day to review the Board Policy, the Management of Pediculosis Information Packet, and treatment options.

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The following action will be taken to prevent the spread of head lice in district schools:

1. Grades Preschool through Five – When a single case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, parents of all children in a class will be notified by the school nurse. The Principal or designee will send home a copy of a Head Lice Alert Notice, the school district's Management of Pediculosis Information Packet, and this Policy to all parents of children in the class.

    a. The information provided to parents will clearly notify parents that treatment should only be performed on their child if active head lice or nits are found in their child's scalp and treatment should not be applied as a preventative measure. This notification will inform parents they are expected to notify the school nurse if they find active head lice or nits in their child's scalp. The school nurse will perform a head check of any student if requested by the parent.

    b. The school nurse will perform head checks of all students in a classroom where there are three or more active head lice cases or nits in the same classroom within a two week period.

2. Grades Six through Eight – When a single case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, parents of children in a class or on a team may be sent a Head Lice Alert Notice, the school district's Management of Pediculosis Information Packet, and this Policy at the discretion of the Principal or designee and the school nurse. Parents may request information regarding head lice from the school nurse. The school nurse will perform a head check of any student if requested by the parent.

3. Grades Nine through Twelve – When a single case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, parents of children in a class or on a team may be sent a Head Lice Alert Notice, the school district's Management of Pediculosis Information Packet, and this Policy at the discretion of the Principal or designee and the school nurse. Parents may request information regarding head lice from the school nurse. The school nurse will perform a head check of any student if requested by the parent.

When a case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, the school nurse shall perform a head check of any of the infested student's siblings in the school. If a sibling(s) attends a different school in the district, the school nurse in the sibling's school will be notified and the school nurse may conduct a head check of the sibling(s). In addition, anytime the school nurse has identified active head lice, the school nurse may conduct a head check of other students in the school who are most likely to have had head-to-head contact with the infested child. All other students to be checked shall be identified by the school nurse in consultation with the school administration. Parental approval shall be obtained by the Principal or designee or school nurse.

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Each school in the district will make available to parents the district's Management of Pediculosis Policy.

All school staff members will maintain a sympathetic attitude and will not stigmatize and/or blame families who experience difficulty with control measures. All school staff members will act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community regarding issues of head lice.

Each school in the district will educate and encourage children and parents to learn about head lice in an attempt to remove any stigma or to prevent any harassment, intimidation, and bullying associated with this issue. Any instances of harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall be reported and investigated in accordance with the provisions of the district's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy.

A student excluded from school for reasons outlined in this Policy shall be readmitted only upon the examination and approval of the Principal or designee and the school nurse. The examination for readmittance to school by the school nurse may be, but is not required to be, in the presence of the student's parent.

Cases of active head lice will be recorded by the school nurse in each school for the purpose of tracking incident rates and mandatory reporting of outbreaks will be done according to the New Jersey Department of Health criteria for reporting outbreaks.

Adopted: 30 March 2015
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