

Fall River Public Schools

Head Lice Management in Schools Policy

The Fall River Public Schools Health Offices follow the school head lice guidelines outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control and the National Association of School Nurses.

Students exhibiting signs of possible head lice infestation are referred to the school nurse for assessment. Symptoms prompting a referral may include complaints of an itchy scalp, excessive scratching or sighting of a louse, and can be made by the student or staff member. The nurse will examine the student for the presence of lice or nits. If live lice or nits are found, the student may return to class for the remainder of the school day based on the school nurse's discretion. The student should be discouraged from close direct head contact with others. The student may be dismissed if the school nurse's assessment indicates that the student is uncomfortable due to the severity of the infestation. Staff will maintain the privacy of students identified as being infected with head lice.

The school nurse will contact the parent/guardian after identification of head lice or nits and will be given specific instructions on how to treat for lice. School nurses will perform targeted pediculosis screenings based on the affected student's known close contacts and siblings. Whole class screenings for nits alone have not been proven to be effective and will only be performed based on multiple live lice infestations found in a single class.

If a student is dismissed from school, the school nurse will re-examine the student upon returning to determine the initial success of the recommended treatment. Students may attend class regardless of the presence of lice/nits based on nurse's discretion. If the infestation is unchanged, the school nurse may request that the student's caregiver come into the school nurse's office for instruction on identification and removal of nits/lice.

If a cluster of cases are discovered in the same classroom, a general informational notice regarding lice may be sent home to the parents/guardians of the students in the classroom based on nursing discretion.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Educate parents/guardians regarding their responsibility in screening/treating for nits/lice and provide resources such as the Public Health Fact Sheet on Head Lice from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. School nurses will periodically remind and educate parents on the importance of informing their child's School Nurse if their child has head lice.
- Educate building staff by providing copies of the fact sheet and encouraging students' outer clothing be placed in individual lockers or separate hanging hooks.
- Educate students about how head lice are passed from person to person and from objects such as shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair accessories.