

Head lice school policy (example)

[NAME OF SCHOOL]

Note: This policy is a sample only that incorporates recommended practices. Please read it to ensure it is appropriate to your needs and make any amendments and additions as required. Delete this paragraph from your customised version.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. This school policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the school community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the main responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice our school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

This school policy draws on information from the *Scratching for Answers?* information pamphlet and management guidelines.

It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this school that you will:

- Check your children's hair for head lice weekly, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method.
- Not allow your child to attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009).
- Regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary.
- Tie your child's hair back if it is long.
- Treat head lice safely and as recommended.
- Notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they can check their children and treat if necessary.
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community around issues of head lice.
- Sign an agreement accepting the terms of the School Head Lice Policy.

To support parents/carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the school will:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the finding, treating and controlling head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the school.
- Include information and updates in school newsletters.
- Include annual head lice updates for staff in-service programs.
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government.
- Follow the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge.
- Only exclude children from school with live insects.
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Encourage children to learn about head lice to help reduce stigma or bullying.
- Ask all families to sign an agreement accepting the conditions of the school's head lice policy.

- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may have and seek extra support if required.
- Participate in a Head Lice Local Area Network to work with other schools, childcare centres, health services and pharmacists in your Local Government Area to achieve consistent management and policy.
- Review the head lice policy annually and seek endorsement from the School Council/community.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community around issues of head lice.
- Seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

There is no requirement for any school to undertake head-lice inspection programs however those that do need to consider the following as additions to a school head lice policy:

- Ensure that any person employed by the school, or volunteering, to undertake head lice inspections will adhere to the school policy and Department of Health information.
- Only inspect the heads of children whose parents have given consent.
- Develop a generic/blanket consent form which parents sign at commencement of school year.
- Respect the wishes of parents/families who elect not to participate in a school head lice check.
- Give a letter to all children involved in head lice inspections to help reduce the stigma and maintain confidentiality.
- Include teachers and school staff in inspection.