



HEAD LICE POLICY

This is to make you aware in case of head lice have been identified in our school. Lice outbreaks are very common among school children. Head lice do not carry any disease, and their presence does not indicate a lack of cleanliness.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

1. **Prevention:** Informing students, parents, and staff about ways to prevent the spread of head lice.
2. **Identification:** Procedures for identifying head lice, including symptoms to look out for and methods for conducting regular checks of students' heads.
3. **Treatment:** Guidelines for treating head lice infestations, which may include using over-the-counter or prescription medications, as well as recommendations for removing lice and their eggs from the environment, such as washing bedding and clothing in hot water.
4. **Notification:** Procedures for informing parents and staff if head lice are identified in the school, along with reassurance that confidentiality will be maintained to protect the privacy of affected individuals.
5. **Return to School:** Policies regarding when students can return to school after being treated for head lice, which typically involve being nit-free and no longer actively infested.
6. **Support:** Providing support and resources for families dealing with head lice infestations, including information on where to seek treatment and how to prevent re-infestation.

I. PREVENTION

1. **Avoid Head-to-head contact:** Children get lice from other children through head to head contact during play or sports or nap time and most often in school settings.
2. **Personal items:** sometimes sharing combs, hats or school lockers with a louse-infested child can spread head lice.
3. **Regular checks:** Encourage routine checks of children's scalps for signs of head lice, especially after potential exposure or if there are reports of lice in the community. You can't spread the eggs, only live lice.
4. **Cleanliness:** While head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene, maintaining good personal hygiene practices, such as regular hair washing, can help reduce the risk of infestation. Any child can get head lice. It doesn't matter where they live or go to school. Children get head lice almost as much as the common cold. Millions get it at least once a year.
5. **Proper storage:** Encourage students to store their belongings separately to minimize the risk of lice transmission.
6. **Environmental measures:** Regularly clean and vacuum areas where children's belongings are stored, such as backpacks, coats, and bedding.

II. IDENTIFICATION

1. Head lice are tiny grey to brown insects about the size of a sesame seed that live in human hair and must feed on human blood to live.



2. They lay tiny white oval-shaped eggs about the size of a knot in a thread. Lice glue their eggs to each strand of hair close to the scalp. Although it is hard to see head lice, a person can see the eggs if they look closely.

III. Treatment

Use an approved shampoo treatment that you find at the drugstore. Follow the directions on the packaging exactly.

1. Remove as many eggs as possible with a special comb that comes with the head lice treatment.
2. Treat your home at the same time you treat your child.

Do the following:

- ❖ Soak combs and brushes for 5-10 minutes in some of the lice shampoo for 1 hour or in very, very hot water.
- ❖ Wash sheets, blankets and other bedding in the hottest setting of water in the washing machine. Dry in a hot dryer.
- ❖ Dry-clean non-washable items or seal these items in a plastic bag for 1 week or tumble them in a very hot dryer.
- ❖ Vacuum furniture, carpets and mattresses thoroughly.
- ❖ Treat hair a second time 7 to 10 days after the first treatment (or follow the instructions of the manufacturer of the lice treatment) to make sure that you kill any lice that may have hatched from eggs that might have been missed during the combing.

IV. NOTIFICATION

1. Routine Head Checks:

- ✓ The school conducts random head checks for all students, from Kindergarten (KiGa) up to Grade 12, after every school break.
- ✓ Please note that **combs are not used** during these checks; we rely on visual inspection only.
- ✓ After each student is checked, **we will disinfect our hands** to ensure hygiene.

2. Action if Head Lice or Nits Are Found:

- ✓ If a student is found to have live head lice or nits (lice eggs), **parents will be notified** immediately and asked to pick up the student from school.
- ✓ **Treatment must be done on the same day** the lice are detected. If a parent is unable to treat the child that day, the child will **not be allowed to return to school the next day** until the lice are treated.
- ✓ Siblings of the affected student will also be checked for lice.



3. Clearance by the School Nurse:

- ✓ Before the student can return to class, they must be **cleared by the school nurse**.
- ✓ The nurse will issue a **clearance note** that must be submitted to the classroom teacher.
- ✓ **Parents must drop off the child** directly at school; the student cannot use the school bus until **they have been cleared to ensure no further spread of lice**.

4. Bus Policy:

- ✓ **Bus drivers will be informed** not to pick up or drop off any child found with head lice to prevent spreading the infestation on the school bus.

5. Reporting Head Lice at Home:

- ✓ If you discover that your child has head lice at home, please contact the **school nurse immediately**.
- ✓ It is crucial to act swiftly to **prevent the lice from spreading to other students** and family members.

6. School Response to Live Lice Detection:

- ✓ When a student is found with **live lice**, the school nurse will be notified immediately.
- ✓ A full check will be conducted to confirm the presence of lice, and the entire **grade level** will be inspected.

7. Notification to Families:

- ✓ If lice are detected in any grade level, an **email notification** will be sent to families of students in that grade.
- ✓ Parents are encouraged to **check their children** at home regularly for lice and nits.

8. Educational Resources for Treatment and Prevention:

- ✓ The school will provide families with **educational materials** about effective lice treatments for students, family members, and advice for cleaning the home to prevent re-infestation.

V. RETURN TO SCHOOL

1. Any student with lice must receive appropriate treatment before returning to school. The student will be examined upon their return to confirm the absence of live head lice or nits, as well as to determine if treatment is ongoing (even if nits are still present) before being allowed to return to class.
2. If head lice are still present after three treatments, **your child will need to be seen by a healthcare professional** for further assistance or recommendation. It is important to note that the student will only be allowed to return to school with a doctor's note confirming the successful treatment.



VI: SUPPORT

How Do You Keep Lice from Coming Back?

1. Teach family members to recognize eggs and how lice are spread and check everyone's hair.
2. If you find lice, follow the recommended treatment closely. It should be reported to the school nurse, who may want to check close contacts.
3. Remind children not to share combs, brushes, hair accessories, headphones, hats, clothing, bedding, coats and so forth. Emotional Support: Dealing with head lice can be emotionally taxing for families, especially if there is stigma or embarrassment associated with it. Offer empathetic support and reassurance, reminding them that head lice are a common problem that can happen to anyone and do not reflect personal hygiene or cleanliness.
4. **Professional Assistance:** For severe infestations or cases where families are struggling to eliminate head lice, recommend seeking assistance from healthcare professionals. In Kenya you can also go to a barbershop who can help you to remove lice and their eggs.
5. **Follow-Up and Monitoring:** Encourage families to follow the recommended treatment protocol and provide guidance on how to monitor for any signs of re-infestation. Regular check-ins at the health office can help ensure that families feel supported throughout the process.
6. If you have any questions concerning head lice please contact the health office, the pharmacist or your child's teacher.

