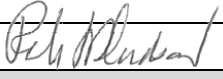




## St. Patrick's School, Nhill

# HEAD LICE POLICY

Recommended by SAC	Ratified	Next Review Date
27/3/2019	27/3/2019	2022
<b>Policy Authorisation – Canonical Administrator</b>		
Fr. Peter Hudson	Signature	
<b>Document History</b>		
V1.1	2019	Review
V1.0	2016	Adoption

## Rationale

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.

## Definitions

**Head lice (pediculosis)** have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice. Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on humans. If isolated from the head they die very quickly, usually within 24 hours. People get head lice from direct hair to hair contact with another person who has head lice and may also spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes, hats and scarves. Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

**Visual head lice check** – without physical contact, do not require parent consent and are made by people authorised by the Principal e.g. classroom teachers.

**Physical head lice check** – require written parental consent, usually obtained at enrolment, and are made by people authorised by the Principal e.g. school nurse or parent volunteer.

In this document all references to '**parents**' includes parents and/or legal guardians and/or carers.

## Aims

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure effective processes of treating head lice.
- To ensure that parents are well informed about head lice and treatment.

## Implementation

It is the expectation of the school that parents will:

- Regularly, preferably once a week, check for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and all household members.

- Notify the school if their child is affected and when treatment commenced.
- Not send their child to school with untreated head lice.
- Tie their child's hair back if it is long.
- Treat head lice safely and as recommended.
- Notify the parents 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.
- Collect your child immediately from school once notified that live head lice have been found.

To support parents 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.
- Provide practical advice and maintain confidentiality, 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 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.
- All students inspected will be provided with a confidential report indicating to parents the results of the inspection (Attachment C), as well as advice on the latest information regarding head lice.
- Only exclude children from school with live insects.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the Principal will ensure that students identified with live head lice will be:
  - Provided with a note to take home to inform the parent that their child may have head lice (Attachment A).
  - Provided with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
  - Excluded from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table.
- 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. Only children whose parents have given their permission will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked.

- Respect the wishes of parents who elect not to participate in a school head lice check.
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may have and seek extra support if required.
- 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.
- Include teachers and school staff in head lice inspections.
- Parents can contact the Principal or Administration Staff during school hours with any questions regarding head lice;
- Provide appropriate professional development regarding head lice if required;
- Nominate a person who will be authorised to carry out visual or physical checks of students' heads for head lice;
- All school staff will adhere to the school policy and Department of Health information.

The Principal will:

- Alert parents/guardians of an infestation, particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child/children (Attachment B).
- Use discretion about informing the school community about an infestation. (Note: The Department of Human Services indicates at any one time there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools, so it is not advocated that the Principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.)
- Ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy infestation.

## Reference

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (Victoria)

School Policy & Advisory Guide (website)

Department of Health (Victoria) (website)

Department of Health (Victoria) School Exclusion Table

Related legislation: Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001

Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

**Attachment A**



**St. Patrick's School**

29 Leahy Street  
P.O. Box 113  
NHILL VIC 3418  
PHONE (03) 5391 1575  
FAX (03) 5391 1506  
EMAIL principal@spnhill.catholic.edu.au

Date: ..... / ..... /20.....

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Head lice or eggs are suspected to have been detected on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please see the attached pamphlet, *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

It is very important for you to notify St. Patrick's School to advise when appropriate treatment has commenced.

It is important to note that health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note that this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

Please complete the below form and provide this to the Principal on the return of your child to school.



**Action Taken – Student Head Lice  
Parent/Guardian/Carer Response Form**

To: The Principal, St. Patrick's School

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Student's Full Name: ..... Year Level: .....

I understand that my child should not attend school with untreated head lice.

I used the following recommended treatment for head lice or eggs for my child:

(insert name of treatment) .....

Treatment commenced on (insert date) ..... / ..... /20.....

Signature of parent/carer/guardian: ..... Date ..... / ..... /20.....

## Attachment B



## St. Patrick's School

29 Leahy Street  
P.O. Box 113  
NHILL VIC 3418  
PHONE (03) 5391 1575  
FAX (03) 5391 1506  
EMAIL [principal@spnhill.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@spnhill.catholic.edu.au)

Date: ..... / ..... /20.....

### They're Back .....

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

It has come to my attention that some students in the school may have head lice and I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair this week (insert date \_\_/\_\_/\_\_ to \_\_/\_\_/\_\_).

Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. You may be reassured to know that head lice are commonly found in places other than at St. Patrick's School. Head lice are common in school-aged children and are the most adaptable of creatures. They have survived living solely on humans for 10,000 years.

#### What can you do?

I seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair and in those instances where head lice or eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

Please see the attached pamphlet *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

#### How do I treat my child for head lice?

The attached pamphlet (as noted above) has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs. The school also has additional information available regarding treatment and controlling head lice. Please don't hesitate to contact (insert relevant person) on 53911575 to obtain this information.

#### If head lice or eggs are found on your child's hair you need to inform:

- the school and advise when the treatment has started, via the attached *Action Taken Form*.
- parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

#### When can my child return to school?

Health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note, this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

St. Patrick's School is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

Attachment C



**St. Patrick's School**

29 Leahy Street  
P.O. Box 113  
NHILL VIC 3418  
PHONE (03) 5391 1575  
FAX (03) 5391 1506  
EMAIL principal@spnhill.catholic.edu.au

Date: ...../...../20.....

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Consistent with the school's Head Lice Policy, the school's nominated head lice resource/support person conducted a visual / physical check of your child's head for head lice.

Your child ..... was found to be free of live head lice and eggs (nits).

I would take this opportunity to remind you of the school's expectation as outlined in the Head Lice Policy that you will

- regularly, preferably once a week, check for lice or eggs in the hair of your child and all household members;
- notify the school if your child is affected and when treatment commenced;
- not send your child to school with untreated head lice.

A copy of the Head Lice Policy is available on the school's website.

Yours sincerely,

Principal.