

Policy Number	Ratification Date	Reviewed	Review Date
34	2016	June 2020	June 2023



# HEAD LICE

## Purpose

To support and provide consistent and practical advice on the management of head lice in partnership with parents/carers.

To manage and ultimately reduce outbreaks of head lice at Elsternwick Primary School (EPS).

## Description

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled. Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.

## Policy

Upon enrolment, parents/carers will be asked to sign a permission form allowing their children to be inspected by the First Aid Officer for the presence of head lice for the duration of their attendance at Elsternwick Primary School. Only children whose parents/carers have returned the permission form will be inspected, however, all students may be visually checked. Information and updates are communicated via Compass, especially during heavy infestations in a year level cohort. Information on detection and treatment of head lice is available from [www.dhs.vic.govc.au/phd/headlice](http://www.dhs.vic.govc.au/phd/headlice).

Staff suspecting that a student has head lice is to report their concerns to the First Aid Officer. EPS abide by the recommendations of the Health (infectious diseases) regulations 2001, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from school rests with the principal or person in charge until initial treatment has commenced. The First Aid Officer will notify parents if a child is found to have head lice, provide further advice on treatment methods and notification to be more vigilant with checking their child/children's heads for head lice. EPS will maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

## Suggested Parent/Carer Action

- Children with long hair must attend school with hair tied back.
- Children's hair will be checked at home on a weekly basis, using a recommended conditioner/combing method.
- Child/children do not attend school with untreated head lice (in accordance with health Infectious Diseases Regulations 2001).
- Regularly inspect all household members and treat outbreaks in accordance with the safe and recommended practices for treating head lice.
- Parents/carers will notify the school if their child/ren is found to have live lice and advise when treatment has commenced.
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising/blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures.

## Other Resources

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/headlice.aspx>  
<http://ideas.haeth.vic.gov.au/bluebook/pediculosis.asp>  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice>.

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.