

PEDICULOSIS
(Head Lice)

Purpose:

It is the policy of the Board of Education of the Sharon Springs Central School District that all students shall have their health related needs addressed through assessment, intervention, health education and safety measures.

Definition:

Pediculosis is caused by a parasitic form of lice: Head Lice, Body Lice, Pubis Lice. Parasitic meaning that they feed on human blood and lay their eggs (nits) in body hair or clothing fiber. After the nits hatch, the lice must feed within four hours or die; they mature in about two to three weeks. When the louse bites, it injects a toxin into the skin that produces a mild irritation and skin discoloration. Treatment can effectively eliminate lice.

Policy Provisions:

1. Diagnosis of head lice is made by direct inspection of the scalp and hair for the presence of live lice and/or eggs (nits).
2. If head lice and/or nits are found, the student is excluded from the classroom and from school. The parent will be contacted to transport the student home and under special circumstances only, the district shall transport the child home without risk of further student exposure. The parent will be notified by the school nurse of:
 - a. The correct methods of treatment;
 - b. The fact that the child must be excluded from school until treated and all nits are removed;
 - c. The fact that once all nits are removed, parents must provide transportation to school, and pending examination by the nurse, may be requested to return the child to his/her home for further treatment.

Measures should be taken to prevent the identification of a child with head lice to other children. An immediate head check of all in-school siblings, and others in close contact (ie..those who share bus seats, teammates, close friends), should be instituted. After finding a case of head lice at the elementary level, all other students in that same classroom must be checked as soon as possible. Periodic sampling of classrooms may be helpful. The frequency of sampling will be determined based on incidents of the problem and peak periods of infestation. Re-inspection of the hair and scalp must be carried out when a child is presented for re-admission to school. Since it is not possible to determine which nits are viable and those which are not, the presence of nits is to be considered continued infestation and the child remains excluded for further care.

3. If a child is repeatedly excluded for pediculosis, appropriate referrals to his/her health provider or public health provider will be made at the discretion of the School Nurse and Building Administrator to provide assistance.
4. Students sent home four or more consecutive times will be reported to the Board of Education and may be denied admission to school until all health criteria are met.
5. Final action may include a referral to Child Protective Services for investigation – if excessive absence is due to pediculosis, action may be taken for educational neglect.
6. If no problem is found the child may return to class. These children then should be monitored weekly until they have been lice and nit free for four weeks.
7. Early treatment coupled with environmental precaution is the key to interrupting the transmission. The parents will be given a Head Lice Information sheet for treatment guidelines. Control within the school environment will be at the discretion of the School Nurse and Building Administrator, based on grade level and incidence of the problem.
8. The Superintendent of Schools and Building Principal will be notified when a number of cases or an epidemic exists within a school (an epidemic is typically defined as greater than 20% of the student classroom population).
9. When a case has been identified, all students in the same homeroom will take home the Parental Notification Form included with this policy.
10. Parents of effected children will also be given the Parent Information Sheet to provide some guidance regarding treatment.
11. Informational handouts as detailed in this policy must be used. Additional informational materials may be included at the discretion of the school nurse.
12. At the beginning of each school year and before summer program, students in grades K-5 will be checked for lice.
13. All new students will be checked as part of the new student evaluation prior to admittance to school.
14. During an outbreak, advise the elementary students to keep coats on the back of chairs with hats and scarves tucked in their sleeves.

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Your child has head lice. Lice are small, gray-white, wingless bugs, no longer than the head of a pin, so tiny that dozens can move in to feed and lay their eggs (nits) without the victim knowing it. The adult can live as long as 30 days. The females lay their eggs and cement them to the hair. This appears as tiny white and/or black dots. However, unlike dandruff, they will not flake off.

1. As soon as possible, check the heads of all other family members. Treat cases where lice or nits are found. If your child has asthma or allergies, contact your physician immediately for advice about treatment.
2. Treat with appropriate pediculicide (head lice shampoo). Don't resort to dangerous treatments (i.e. kerosene). An adult should apply the treatment. Do not let a child treat him/her self. **APPLY EITHER:**
 - a. NIX – leave on for 10-20 minutes
 - b. RID & A-200 – Leave on for 10-20 minutes
 - c. K Well Shampoo – Leave on for 5-10 minutes (requires a prescription)
3. The hair should be rinsed thoroughly with warm water, towel dried, then combed with a fine-tooth comb over the sink.
4. Relying on pediculicide alone may fail to eliminate head lice. The hair should be coated with olive oil, cover the head overnight with a shower cap, and wash out in the morning.
5. Remove all nits. This is VERY important, as your child will not be allowed to re-enter school until all nits are removed.
6. Machine wash all personal headgear, jackets and bed linens in hot water. Place them in the dryer for twenty minutes. Disinfect combs and hairbrushes by soaking them in hot (boiling) water for 5-10 minutes. Articles that cannot be washed should be sealed in plastic bags and left for thirty days. Spray and vacuum carpets, couches and your car/truck. Discard vacuum bags.
7. Retreatment is necessary in 6-10 days.
8. Check for head lice on a regular basis. This is the best way to protect your family and community.



I have received the Head Lice, No-Nit Information Sheet.

Parent's Signature

Date

Student's Name

Student's Teacher

SSCS HEALTH OFFICE ALERT PARENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

Dear Parents,

We wish to bring to your attention that a case of head lice has been reported in your child's classroom. We suggest that you check your child periodically for the next two weeks. In the event that you observe what you feel may be evidence of head lice, please notify the school nurse at 284-2266 ext. 107 so that we may check children who may have been in contact with your family member and may have been affected or may have been a source of infestation.

Head Lice (*Perdiculosis Capitis*) are highly communicable and difficult to prevent. The following information should help you identify and treat head lice safely and thoroughly. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

What to Look For: Head Lice are elongated insects and are grayish-white with dark margins. Lice do not have wings and therefore, cannot fly. They do not jump, but move very quickly; this makes it difficult to find them in a child's hair. Since crawling forms are so difficult to see, the diagnosis of head louse infestation is frequently made on the basis of finding nits. A nit is a louse egg. Nits are teardrop in shape and vary in color from yellowish-brown to white. Head lice attach each nit to a hairshaft with a water-proof cement like substance. Thus, nits cannot be washed or brushed out of the hair like dandruff or other debris that sometimes look like nits to the naked eye. Clusters of nits may be found in any section of hair particularly behind ears and the nape of the neck, but in mild infestations a careful examination of the entire scalp may be necessary to detect.

Symptoms of Infestation: The itching that occurs when lice bite and suck blood from the scalp is a primary symptom of infestation, although not everyone will experience the itching. Children seen scratching their heads frequently should be examined at once. Often red bite marks or scratch marks can be seen on the scalp and neck. In severe cases, a child may develop swollen glands in the neck or under the arm.

Treatment of the Individual: All family members should be examined. Those showing evidence of infestation should all be treated at the same time. Individual treatment is a multi-step process involving the use of a pediculicidal shampoo or rinse and a combing tool manufactured for the purpose of nit removal. Proceed as follows:

- a. Purchase a lice-killing shampoo, such as RID or NIX and follow the directions carefully. You may want to check with your child's health care provider as to what brand they recommend.
- b. Although it can be time consuming and difficult, remove all nits to insure complete treatment. Louse shampoos may not kill all the nits and survivors can hatch into lice within 7-10 days, generating a cycle of self-reinfestation. Even dead nits will cling to the hair and cause uncertainty about reinfestation.

- c. Daily nit check is advisable for at least 10 days following treatment. Retreatment is necessary in 7-10 days (Remember, regardless of precautions taken at home, reinfestation from other can still take place.
- d. At bedtime, coat the head with olive oil and cover with a shower cap. Wash hair in the morning.

Treatment of Personal Articles and Environment: Heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, so many personal articles can be disinfected by machine washing in hot water and using the hot cycle of the dryer.

- a. Machine wash and dry all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with your child.
- b. Personal articles of clothing, bedding, stuffed animals etc, that cannot be washed and dried may be dry cleaned or bagged and sealed for a period of 30 days.
- c. Combs, brushes and similar items can be disinfected by soaking them in one of the pediculicide liquids for one or by soaking them in a pan of boiling water.
- d. To break the infestation-reinfestation cycle, when problems persist there are commercially available sprays which can be sprayed on inanimate objects that cannot be laundered or dry cleaned (furniture, car seats, etc.).
- e. Please remind your child to not use other people's combs, brushes or wear others hats, coats, hair ties etc.

Parents of your child's closest friends should be notified that their child may also be infested since the children play together. This is particularly important if the children have slept over or participated in activities involving frequent body contact such as wrestling, ballet, baseball etc.

Return to School Policy: Your child's head must be free of any signs of infestation, including nits, to return to school. Students whose heads are not clear will be sent home and may not attend school until the head is nit free. Please note a second treatment is necessary 7-10 days after initial treatment.

If you have any questions, please call the school nurse's office at 284-2266.