



## Head Lice Protocol

Head lice, also known as *pediculus humanus capitis*, are a nuisance condition common in school-aged children and those who share beds. An infestation of lice does not indicate an issue with hygiene, is not a health hazard, and does not spread disease. Lice do not jump or fly, they crawl. Itchy heads are a common first sign of an infestation as the saliva of a head louse is irritating. When the louse has a blood meal for nourishment, it secretes a substance that can eventually cause itchiness. This irritation and itchiness from the head lice infestation may not be noticeable until 4 to 6 weeks in.

A student found to have an itchy head or visible live lice shall be discreetly and confidentially referred to the health room for a head lice screening by a school nurse trained school staff person. This typically includes main office administrative assistants, school nurses, and sometimes school principals or deans of students. Staff are trained to identify head lice & nits, how to perform a head lice screening, and the basics of head lice infestation control and treatment along with district resources.

The trained school staff person shall complete a thorough head lice screening in a systematic manner beginning at the crown of the head. A piece of transparent tape with the sticky side out wrapped around a finger is useful for collecting a specimen of what is found on the head during the head lice screening. The specimen may be attached to a piece of paper and presented to the family.

If live head lice are found, the student may return to class.

The trained school staff person shall notify the parent/legal guardian by phone or written note of the findings of the head lice screening and that if live head lice, child must have treatment completed prior to a return to school the following day. Written literature will be provided for the family's reference including *Head Lice: The Process of Getting Rid of It* including a list of treatment options ranging from prescription to over the counter to holistic methods that may not yet be scientifically proven and *Considerations When Head Lice Are Discovered*. Families may opt to pick their child up from school early, but this is not required.

An explanation of the return to school process shall be provided to the parent. The child shall begin their next school day with a head lice screening in the health room before going on to the classroom. If live lice are found during this return to school head lice screening, the child's family will again be notified of the presence of live head lice and additional education on the eradication of head lice provided. This cycle will continue until no live lice are found. The student may go on to class with or without live head lice.

## **Head Lice Protocol**

This process will be shared with the parent when s/he is notified the child has head lice. If only nits are found, the parent will not be notified of findings.

Once child returns to class, further head lice checks are only done if suspected of head lice again due to itching of head or discovery of sibling having lice or parent report of further issues.

The trained school staff person will submit the head lice screening findings on the Head Lice form to school nurses.

School nurses have access to the spreadsheet that the Head Lice form submits data to. The school nurse shall review updates of findings reported daily using the daily notifications feature of the spreadsheet.

Families will be given a retreatment notice about 7 days after first treatment is reported.

Head lice alerts shall be posted to Infinite Campus for classmates when 50% or more of the classroom has had head lice within any 7 day or fewer window. Health literacy items to be included are the DHS Pediculosis Fact Sheet, the *Head Lice: The Process of Getting Rid of It* sheet that includes a varied list of treatment options ranging from prescription to over the counter to holistic methods, and *Considerations When Head Lice Are Discovered* sheet.

Students are directed not to pick head lice from other's heads at any time. If someone suspects they may have seen something, that student may inform the teacher or school staff person. The teacher or school staff person may use discreet judgement on what action to take based upon hearsay.

Any student suspected of head lice because of excessive head itching or sibling discovery of head lice should be sent to the main office/health room for a discreet and confidential head lice screening by trained school staff.

Each school nurse will provide a head lice screening on family members who may not otherwise have someone able to assist with this task, if requested.

Students should not share personal items like combs/brushes/hair ties/hats and keep their coat from touching others' coats. If a coat may have touched others' coats, give a firm shake of the garment prior to putting the coat back on.

Students who need personal items to keep themselves warm should not have the items collected and redistributed to other students until items have been laundered or bagged for 14 days. Ideally, the student is issued an item to keep ongoing.

Students should be reminded to maintain personal bubble space, adults too. Avoid direct head-to-head contact with others.

## **P. 3**

### **Head Lice Protocol**

Custodial services have cleaning schedules that include daily vacuuming and cleaning of surfaces. No sprays or additional cleaning are necessary, nor should be used. Remember, only school owned items are cleaned/treated. Individuals would be responsible for cleaning personal items in use in the classroom or other school location. Hard surfaces versus fuzzy or cloth surfaces are preferred for ease of cleaning, laundering, or bagging in all circumstances. Staff shall not bring in sprays from home for cleaning. Contact custodial services for assistance with materials to bag items. Label bag with date it may be put back into circulation/use. No head lice sprays will be used in the schools or vehicles.

Main office administrative assistants and the designated substitutes or other personnel will be trained in head lice screening techniques, head lice identification, treatments, and this protocol. Staff are encouraged to collaborate with the school's nurse as needed.

The district will not perform mass screenings for head lice.

Family education, prevention, and mitigation about head lice in children will occur through school newsletter articles and or Infinite Campus announcements. Families are encouraged to routinely check each of their child's heads for head lice at home. Ideally, this is done daily or once every few days. When someone in the home is found to have head lice and they attend one of the PCSD schools, parents are asked to report this to the main office administrative assistants. Print materials and guidance will be offered on how to treat head lice and the return to school process. A cornerstone to this process is that some form of treatment must occur at home prior to the child's return to school.