



Thomas Hinderwell
Primary Academy
Broadening Horizons

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Dear Parents/Carers

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We continue to receive reports of cases of head lice in school. We would ask that everybody checks their child's hair and, if necessary, take the appropriate action.

General Information

Head lice are small, flat-backed insects about 1-2 millimetres in length. They are greyish-white in colour and live amongst the hair of the scalp. They feed off scalp blood and have a total life expectancy of about 30 days during which time they can lay about 300 eggs. The head lice can only live for a maximum of 2 days if away from the head.

Detection & Prevention

Lice are most easily detected by fine tooth-combing wet hair. If, after careful combing of shampooed hair from the roots, no lice are found then there is no need to consider any treatment; even if there are cases in school of which you are aware. If head lice are discovered there are two options to deal with the problem:

1. "Wet-combing" method

Advantages – cheap & chemical free Disadvantages – time consuming and can take up to 2 weeks to clear the problem.

- Wash hair in the normal way with an ordinary shampoo
- Using lots of hair conditioner (a cheap brand is just as good), comb through the hair at the roots with a fine tooth nit comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with every stroke.
- Clean the comb after every stroke onto a pale surface (such as kitchen towel) so that you can easily see if there are any lice or eggs present.
- Wet lice find it difficult to escape and conditioner makes the hair slippery making it harder for them to grip and easier to remove.
- If any lice are detected, repeat this routine every 3-4 days for 2 weeks so that any lice emerging from the eggs are removed before they can spread.
- A good tip is to use a spray made from tea tree oil (available from Holland & Barretts) between washes. Comb this through daily as head lice do not seem to like it one little bit!!

2. Using lotions

Advantages – quick Disadvantages – can cause irritation in some cases.

Please ask a pharmacist to recommend the appropriate product if your child or anybody in the family suffers from asthma.

Your local pharmacist will be able to recommend the appropriate and most effective lotion. Treatment recommendations vary from time to time to ensure that head lice do not become resistant to the active ingredient in a particular product.

If the problem persists you could discuss the issue with your family doctor who is able to offer treatment "on prescription" in some cases.

REMEMBER – Head lice can live on ALL hair types including adults. If you find any unwelcome visitors in your child's hair, all family members should check their hair also. The only way to keep this issue under control is if everyone remains vigilant and REGULARLY checks their child's hair. Thank you to all those who are already taking this matter seriously – it is very much appreciated.

