



HEADLICE POLICY

Head lice are very common in young children especially in a school environment, Head lice can affect people from any background and it does not imply a lack of hygiene or cleanliness of the infected person. They are picked up by head-to-head contact and, because children regularly come into close contact with each other, head lice can move freely from head to head.

In order to prevent others becoming infected, we feel it is important that staff and parents follow the following protocol to manage confirmed cases of Head lice and prevent them spreading.

Head lice love all types of hair, we ask that all children and parents are sensitive and understanding towards the child.

- We ask that head lice are treated immediately after they are found to prevent cross-infection to other children.
- We ask that all children with long hair wear their hair up to prevent the spread of head lice
- We ask that parents check their children's hair once a week with a special head lice comb to aid early detection.
- We ask that parents inform us immediately if they have discovered that their child has head lice.
- We ask that parents vacuum floors and furniture (including car seats) and wash bedding, clothes and towels as head lice can live up to 24 hours on non-human surfaces.
- We will provide information on the effective treatment and detection of head lice
- We will inform all parents in each year group if there is a case of head lice. To respect confidentiality, we will not name the child/children affected.
- We will assist in the prevention of head lice by ensuring that younger children (especially in Early Years and Primary) only use their own hairbrushes and combs and that the play dressing up hats are regularly cleaned.

When head lice cases are confirmed

- We will telephone the child's parents and **ask** them to come and collect their child so that they can be taken home to treat the head lice.
- We will make it clear that children can return to school after the child has been treated.
- We will also send an information letter (Appendix 1 Informative letter sent to parents) to all parents within the year group to advise them of a confirmed case of head lice and to explain how to treat their child's hair.
- We will make sure that a child will be checked out of view of other children.
- We will ensure the child is not isolated.
- We will ensure that parents are informed away from other parents or children.

Updated January 2024

To be reviewed in January 2026

Dear Parents,

The purpose of this letter is to provide information about head lice and how to treat them. It is essential that you check your child's hair regularly, ideally once a week. Only if we **all** do so will we be able to stop the cycle of head lice in school. I know how frustrating it is when your child comes home scratching their head again!

Head lice are most common amongst young children who spend time in close contact with friends. The best-known symptom is itching but some children with head lice do not itch at all. Head lice range in size from a full stop to a sesame seed and are grey/brown in colour. They can be difficult to find and it is important to check the whole family if you find any in your child's hair.

They have no preference for the cleanliness of the hair they live in and cannot fly or jump but are spread by head-to-head contact.

Headlice can live for up to 24hrs on non-human surfaces, like carpets, hardwood floors, clothing, furniture, sports helmets, car seats, headphones, or hair accessories.

They may look like dandruff but cannot be removed by brushing or by shaking them off. Lice hatch within 1-2 weeks and the remaining shell is white/clear in colour and continues to be firmly attached to the hair.

Where to look

- close to the scalp
- behind the ears
- the back of the neck
- under the fringe
- It is best to check using a special comb, ideally white, so they can be seen with teeth no more than 0.3 mm apart, in order to trap them. It may be more comfortable to comb the hair when wet or after applying conditioner.

How to treat

If a living louse is found go to a pharmacy and ask for a treatment. Ensure that you cover the full length of the hair and ensure that the treatment is left on for the recommended time. Some treatments specify a second application.

Research shows that a non-pesticide lotion works best.

Please check

It is essential that you CHECK your child's hair 2/3 days after treatment to ensure all lice have been killed.

- Vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture.
- Clean car seats
- Wash bedding, clothing, and washable toys like stuffed animals in hot water. (If possible tumble dry on high heat for at least 20 minutes to kill lice.)
- Wash all bed linens, towels, and clothing in very hot water that is at least 130°F (54°C), (followed by the hot cycle of your dryer for 20 minutes.)

I hope that this was informative and that you will all co-operate in regular hair checking at home!

Thank you,
Jenni Garnett
Early Years Lead