Head Lice Policy

Focus

Most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time. The school is aware that this can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining student confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation.

Berwick Fields Primary School acknowledges that, while parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, schools also have a role in management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents and students.

Guidelines

- The Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, state that when children are identified as having Head Lice (eggs and/or insects) they must be excluded from school until appropriate treatment has commenced and that children may return to school after treatment. Upon detection of head lice, parents must notify the school and advise in writing when treatment has commenced. Use only safe and recommended practices when treating head lice (see supporting document ‘Treating Controlling Lice’).

- At the commencement of each year parents will be asked to sign a consent form accepting the terms of this Policy. The wishes of those parents who elect for their children not to participate in a school head lice check must be respected. Parents not signing permission forms will be asked to inspect children at school during the same day the class is checked.

- A requirement at the School is that parents refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion. One treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem and if a child re-attends school with live lice the school may again exclude the child until the live insects have been removed.

- The First Aid Coordinator and Health and Well Being coordinator are responsible for implementing the program and ensuring parents involved are suitable, appropriately trained and meet confidentiality requirements.

Continued on next page
Head Lice Policy, Continued

Implementation

- The First Aid Coordinator will be responsible for training parents in performing regular screening checks of all classes. They will also specifically check classes were cases have been found.

- Parents involved in the Head Lice Screening Program must sign confidentiality agreements and complete the training program before checking any students.

- Upon observation of a case or cases of head lice, or having been informed of such cases by parents or school staff will report this to the First Aid Coordinator, Principal or Assistant Principal.

- It is expected that each class would be checked once a term as part of the routine process of checking all classes. Additional checks would be performed on any class where head lice were found.

- The Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, state that local government nurses, environment health officers and medical officers of health do not have authority to examine students for head lice without parental permission. In the event of a serious outbreak, the services of a private nurse may be sought. Parental permission will be required before treatment.

- Students found with head lice are to be checked by the First Aid Coordinator, a member of the admin staff or head lice check team prior to their return to the classroom.

- Clear protocols for any inspection program must be followed, including a pro-forma for written parental permission for all inspections.

- If a case of head lice occurs, parents of all students in the student’s class will be informed in writing and cooperation is requested.

- Parents will be regularly informed of school policy and advised that additional information is available from Local Government Services through the newsletter.

Continued on next page
Head Lice Policy, Continued

General Comments

- For legal reasons teachers are not to search through children’s hair, but if head lice or nits are observed they are to be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately.

- Parents and the school should train children in good health habits. For example, through newsletter articles.

- Students with shoulder length hair should have their hair tied back.

- It is recommended that parents conduct regular (preferably once per week) inspection of hair for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the most effective method).

Related Documents

Intranet Processes

- Head Lice Management Process

Intranet Supporting Documents

- Head Lice Permission Form
- Head Lice Parent Letter
- Head Lice Parent Invitation
- Head Lice Confidentiality Agreement
- Head Lice Treating and Controlling
- Head Lice Screening Results
- Head Lice Parent Notification

External Links

- DEECD - Head Lice

Review

This Policy shall be reviewed by the Health and Wellbeing Committee by December 2010 or prior if deemed necessary.