

GOORNONG PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Rationale:

To inform and educate parents and teachers on the correct process of reporting and treating head lice.

Background:

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed.

Anyone can catch head lice. It is estimated between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be treated. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact.

Purpose:

- To promote a spirit of cooperation and provide a management plan for the treatment of head lice in the school.
- To ensure that cases of head lice are handled with discretion and sensitivity.
- To outline the roles and responsibilities of parents/teachers/school community in the management of head lice.
- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents/carers are well informed about head lice treatment.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. The school will be an avenue for the relay of current information on the treatment of head lice. All families and the school community will be informed about the implications of existing guidelines.
 - Periodically, material regarding infestation and treatment of head lice will be circulated to the whole school community via the school newsletter.
 - As outbreaks occur in a class each family involved in that class will be informed.
 - Parents and carers are to be provided with appropriate information and/or support regarding safe practice in the treatment of head lice.
2. It is reasonable to expect that parents and carers will regularly (preferably once a week) inspect their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs, using conditioner and a head lice comb.
3. The school will organise regular head lice inspections based on the following guidelines:
 - Written consent will be obtained from parents (usually at enrolment).
 - It is the responsibility of school council to authorise people (eg: parent volunteers) to conduct head lice inspections on students.

- Parent volunteers must have undergone training with the DEECD school nurse or similar.
- Parent volunteers must sign a Confidentiality Agreement which is held at the school (Appendix 2)
- A note (Appendix 1) will be sent home following head lice inspections to inform parents of the outcome of their child's inspection.
- A follow-up inspection may take place on the day that children found to have had live lice return to school following treatment.

It is DEECD policy that students found with live lice be excluded from school until the day after treatment has occurred. The presence of eggs is not cause for exclusion from school.

- The Principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school.

4. Recurrent head lice detection in the school will be as follows:

- Teachers or staff members suspecting recurrent episodes of head lice are to report their concerns to the Principal who will alert the parents to the possibility of head lice infestation in their child. Teachers and other staff members who may believe that a child is infested with head lice are not permitted or qualified to search a child's hair, inspect for head lice, or diagnose a case of head lice.
- The Principal or delegate, with parent consent, may organise authorised officers (medical officer of health, a council or a local health service), to carry out the necessary inspections.
- Upon positive identification of head lice, the principal or delegate will ensure that the parents of any infected child are contacted as soon as possible and informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school in accordance with the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1990 until the day after the child has been treated.
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their child does not attend the school with untreated head lice.

5. As part of the enrolment package, the school will provide documentation requesting parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be screened by our trained personnel for the presence of head lice. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be checked.

Section 5 - Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

This policy was ratified at school council on 17.06.13

Further Resources:

www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/headlice/index.htm

www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/hlice/hlinfo1.htm

www.nitpickers.com.au

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Head_lice_\(nits\)](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Head_lice_(nits))