

Halton District School Board

Administrative Procedure

NUMBER:	
TOPIC:	Head Lice (Pediculosis)
EFFECTIVE:	February 2012
CROSS-REFERENCE:	
REVISION DATE:	February 2015
RESPONSIBILITY:	Superintendent of Education

INTENDED PURPOSE:

The Halton District School Board supports a no-nit approach to children in schools with Pediculosis (head lice).

PROCEDURES:

We recommend schools, especially elementary schools, include an item in the school newsletter about how parents can check their child's head for head lice especially following summer, winter and March breaks. Each suspected case of head lice must be referred to the Screening Agency as it is detected. The agency will verify the condition. The Principal or designate after consulting with the Screening Agency, will inform individual parents of the confirmed case(s) of head lice. Letter (Appendix A) signed by the Principal will be sent home with the child. Parents will be informed that they must have a return-to-school form signed by We Care Home Health Services or a letter from a medical practitioner indicating that the child's head is free from live lice, eggs and nits prior to their child returning to class.

1. CLASSROOM INSPECTION

- To facilitate the classroom inspection, the teacher will organize and supervise the class and provide the Screening Agency with a class list indicating those pupils who are absent.
- When a positive case of head lice is reported to the principal, she/he will arrange for the Screening Agency to carry out a rapid inspection of all classmates and siblings of that pupil.
- The Screening Agency will explain to the teacher and the class what she/he will be doing.
- The Screening Agency will notify the principal of pupils who have head lice.
- The Principal will complete a notification letter (Appendix A) for all positive cases. The notification letter will go home with the child.
- The Principal will inform all parents of the occurrence of head lice in their child's class (Appendix B).

2. PROCEDURES FOR RETURN AFTER TREATMENT

Pupils may return to the school after they have been rechecked by We Care Home Health Services and provided with the required form, signed by the Screening Agency nurse indicating that they may return to class. Parents who prefer to have their child checked, after treatment, by a medical practitioner rather than the screening agency may do so at their own expense.

APPENDIX A

(sample)

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Mr. And Mrs. _____:

Due to a suspicion of head lice being present in the school, a health screening check was recently requested. As a result, your child was found to be affected. Your child is being excluded from school because head lice and/or nits have been discovered in his/her scalp. Head lice is not a health problem. It is common among school children and is treatable.

An information package on head lice is available at the school to assist you. Please consult with a pharmacist or your family doctor, to determine appropriate treatment.

When all the lice and nits have been removed from your child's hair, please call the We Care Home Health Services hotline at **(905) 507-6562 or 1-855-507-6562**. This hotline allows you to leave a message should you require a call back from the agency. Daily messages will be recorded on this hotline regarding school clinic information schedule and daily evening message to advise parents of the next morning's starting points in each section of Halton to avoid calling in the morning.

On re-inspection by the We Care Home Health Services nurse, if the child's head is clear of lice, eggs and nits you will be given a written form signed by the nurse that permits your child to return to school. If there are still lice or nits in your child's hair the nurse will provide you with assistance and suggestions for further treatment. If you prefer, you may have your child's head checked by a medical practitioner and present the medical practitioner's letter that the head is clear of live lice, eggs and nits to the school for re-entry. Parents are responsible for any costs in this regard.

For information about treatment for head lice, go to <http://www.hdsb.ca> and click on Parent Info. Click on Health protocols – on the right hand side, scroll down to Pediculosis for information files. The Health Department website has helpful information about treating head lice at <http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=30565> . Put Head Lice in the Search Area.

Sincerely,

Principal

Appendix B

(Sample)

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Within the past week, some children in your child's class have been found to have head lice. It is advisable that you continue to inspect your child's hair daily.

Head lice infestation is no reflection on the state of cleanliness; it is a recurring problem that can affect anyone in direct contact.

If you find that your child has head lice, it is recommended that you contact the school. This information is necessary to control the spread of head lice. Those children found to have head lice will be excluded from school and the parents advised to follow the recommended course of treatment. Students may return to school when they have been checked by We Care Home Health Services and provided with a signed Return to School form. Alternatively, parents may prefer to have their child's head checked by a medical practitioner.

If you have any questions that have not been answered, please call me at the school.

Sincerely,

Principal

Appendix C

INTRODUCTION

Control of head lice (pediculosis) includes the coordination and monitoring of the services of a private nursing agency to provide classroom screening.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE (905) 825-6000

- PROVIDES consultation to staff on current issues related to head lice, on request
- PROVIDES information on head lice to the media.

2. THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- PROMOTES and institutes preventative measures in the control of head lice in the school environment
- REPORTS a suspected/confirmed case of head lice to the private screening agency to request rapid classroom screening
- ENSURES that the child's parent(s) is notified of the identified infestation and is informed of the requirements prior to returning to school
- EXCLUDES a child with an identified infestation
- PERMITS re-entry of the child following treatment and receipt of written confirmation by the screening agency or medical practitioner that lice and nits are gone.

3. THE TEACHER

- ACTIVELY promotes and institutes preventative measures for the control of head lice in the classroom
- IS AWARE of the symptoms indicating a head lice infestation (Appendix D)
- NOTIFIES the principal of a suspected infestation
- LIAISES with the parents to provide educational opportunities and resource materials to reduce the level of fear and misinformation about head lice.

4. THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

- TO BE AWARE of the symptoms which indicate an infestation

- TO EXAMINE the child's head for a possible infestation once a week, particularly at the beginning of the school year, after school breaks and during an outbreak
- TO ENCOURAGE the child to brush/comb hair nightly as a preventative measure
- TO NOTIFY the school and other possible community contacts if an infestation is discovered
- TO ENSURE that treatment methods are carried out
- TO TAKE the child to the screening agency or medical practitioner for a recheck
- TO PROVIDE to the principal with the rescreening form from the agency or medical practitioner indicating that the child may return to school.

5. PRIVATE NURSING AGENCY STAFF

- RESPONDS as quickly as possible to notification by school of a suspected case
- ARRANGES the time and accommodation with the principal for rapid classroom screening
- INFORMS parent or recommended treatment methods
- WORKS closely with school personnel to minimize any embarrassment to the child and to relieve anxiety in the parent
- PROVIDES the parent with a signed re-admit form to take to school when all nits and lice are gone.

6. SCREENING PROTOCOL FOR AGENCY STAFF IN COOPERATION WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

WHEN one child or more is identified as having head lice:

- SCREEN all students in the child's class
- SCREEN all students in the sibling's class, if the sibling is identified as having head lice

WHEN ten or more children are identified as having head lice:

- SCREEN all kindergarten to grade four classes in the school
- SCREEN other classes relevant to identified case(s) as described above

7. PROCEDURE

- ENSURE good lighting conditions and privacy, if possible
- SEPARATE hair strands using a pair of applicators
- DISCARD applicators in bag following use
- IDENTIFY child as infested ONLY if live lice or viable eggs within 1 cm. (1/2 inch) of scalp are seen
- NOTIFY parent(s)/guardian(s) and advise that child be treated as soon as possible

- ENSURE parent(s)/guardian(s) receive current literature on treatment, follow-up and contact tracing
- SCREEN sibling contacts in private area outside of classroom

APPENDIX D

Symptoms of Pediculosis (Head Lice)

It is very important that parents/caregivers check their children's heads once a week for head lice.

Do not wait for itchiness as a sign of head lice. Children can have head lice for many weeks before they feel itchy.

You know you have head lice if you see:

- Live lice in the hair. Head lice are tiny, wingless, greyish brown insects. They are difficult to see, as they move quickly when you part the hair.
- Eggs of the head louse. Freshly laid eggs are glued to the shaft of the hair and are laid very close to the scalp of the head. The eggs are smaller than the head of a pin, oval in shape and grey to brown in colour. These eggs will hatch in 7-10 days. Although head lice can lay eggs anywhere on the head, favourite spots are around the ears and the nape of the neck.

Public Health Nurse
Halton Public Health Department
Halton Region