



Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Head Lice Protocol

- Head lice can be a nuisance but they have **not** been shown to spread disease. Head lice should NOT be considered a medical or public health hazard. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.
- Nits are lice eggs laid by the adult female and are laid at the base of the hair shaft close to the scalp. Nits that are more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the scalp are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch and become crawling lice, or may in fact be empty shells, also known as casings.
- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- The classroom is one of many environments where head lice can be transmitted when there is direct head to head contact between students. Otherwise, head lice DO NOT jump or fly and cannot survive off the human scalp for any length of time.
- The practice of separating coats, backpacks, etc. has not been found to be effective, as head lice do not stray from the head.
- No environmental pesticide treatments (sprays, pesticide bombs) should be used.
- Encourage students to avoid sharing hats, combs, and pillows; and avoid head-to-head contact.

A. When a student is found to have nits in the hair (no live lice detected):

- 1) The parent is notified by phone and encouraged to comb nits out at least daily for the next two weeks.
- 2) **The student remains in school.**
- 3) Information related to detection and elimination of head lice is sent home with the student in a sealed envelope.
- 4) If future checks reveal an increased number of nits present, then parents will be contacted for follow up and support.
- 5) If future checks reveal live lice, follow part B.

B. When a student is found to have live lice:

- 1) Contact the parent to pick up the student immediately. Confidentiality must be maintained.
- 2) The parent is instructed that the student must be treated before returning to school.
- 3) Information related to detection and elimination of head lice is sent home with parent.
- 4) Upon return to school, the student should be checked every other day for two weeks. This can be done by the classroom teacher or other staff as designated by the principal and in a location is private, respecting the privacy of the student. If live lice are found, the student will not return to the classroom. Parent will be instructed to pick up the student. There must be no live lice before the student returns to school.
- 5) If only nits are found, follow the procedures in part A.
- 6) If live lice are found, the process of notification to parents/guardians begins again and the student must be picked up immediately.

C. When to check beyond the identified student with live lice or nits:

- 1) Determine if the student has siblings in the district.
- 2) If a student is found to have live head lice follow part A or B with siblings as appropriate.
- 3) **Full classroom screening for head lice is not done.**
- 4) Notify the principal or nurse at the sibling(s) school(s) as appropriate.

D. Notification Procedures:

- 1) For elementary students, classroom letters **may** be sent home to inform families so that they are aware and can monitor their children. It is recommended that letters be sent home when there are 4 or more cases of lice at the same time in the same classroom. However, a standard classroom or building wide letter may be distributed at the discretion of each building principal.
- 2) Because secondary students change classes and are much less likely to have had head to head contact, a letter will not be sent except as deemed necessary by the building principal.
- 3) The school nurse in conjunction with the building principal and Director of Nursing Services will use professional judgment to determine when unusual measures are necessary to respond to extraordinary cases.