Westford Public Schools

School Health Services

Management of Students with Head Lice

**Background:**

Head Lice or Pediculosis Capitis is an insect the approximate size of a sesame seed that requires a human host to survive. Head lice is often detected on the human scalp by the presence of adult lice or nits attached to the hair shaft. Infestation is common among children ages 3-12 years old. Head lice does not spread disease. Head lice cannot hop, jump or fly; they crawl. Head lice are primarily spread by close personal contact which occurs in homes, sleep overs, and camps. Head lice is primarily spread within the family/households.

**Procedure:**

Parents are encouraged to conduct routine head checks on their children to prevent the spread of head lice.

A student that exhibits signs and symptoms of head lice should be evaluated by the school nurse educator.

If the school nurse educator finds evidence of live head lice the student will be dismissed to be treated. Siblings of student’s in the school system will also be examined.

**Student Returning to School:**

If live louse was found, the student will be rechecked prior to their return to school.

Children found to have nits are allowed to come to school, although children with adult live lice need treatment before they return to school.

The school nurse educator will determine, based on evaluation, the re-admittance and monitoring of the student upon their return to school.

Head lice are inconvenient but they do not spread disease. Research does not support the practice of wide or classroom wide “head checks”, exclusion of infested children, or a no nit policy. School is an unlikely source of transmission. It is encouraged that parents/guardians check their child’s hair regularly for evidence of head lice. Every family member should be checked if head lice is found in your child. If you need assistance checking for head lice please contact the schools nurse educator.

Reviewed by Westford Public Nurse Educators and the Health Director for the Town of Westford Health Department.

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