

Tehama County Department of Education

Board Policy

Head Lice

The Board of Tehama County Department of Education is committed to maximizing students' academic performance and physical wellbeing in a healthy and safe environment. The District recognizes that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. However, archaic policies cause many unnecessary absences from school with potential negative effects on academic performance. Misinformation about head lice causes anxiety for parents and school staff.

The District defines a healthy and safe environment as one in which adults work together to provide the following environmental factors established by current research as necessary for the health and wellbeing of students with head lice:

- Educating staff, students, and parents/guardians about head lice.
- Establishing evidence based management for students with head lice.

The goals of providing a healthy and safe environment for students with head lice are to:

- Maximize academic performance
- Minimize absence due to unnecessary exclusion of students with head lice

Legal Reference:

Education Codes:

33308.5 Program Guidelines

51890 Comprehensive Health Education Programs

51913 Plan for a Comprehensive Health Education Program

51920 Inservice Training

Business and Professions Codes:

2725-2542 Nursing

Other Reference:

American Academy of Pediatrics

Centers for Disease Control

National Association of School Nurses

Harvard School of Public Health Laboratory of Public Health Entomology

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To better manage and to limit the spread of head lice infestations, school employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the school nurse or designee. The school nurse or designee shall examine the student. An infestation shall be determined by looking closely through the hair and scalp for viable nits (≤ 1 cm from the scalp) or live lice.

If nits are found but there are no live (crawling) lice on the hair, the school nurse or designee shall re-inspect within 7-10 school days.

If live (crawling) lice are found on the hair, the parent/guardian shall be notified by the end of the day via phone, email, and/or a note sent home with the student. The child shall be allowed to remain in the classroom until notification of parent/guardian has been obtained. The parent/guardian shall be provided information on the biology of head lice, methods to eliminate infestation, and directions to examine household contacts for lice and nits. The school nurse or designee may notify parents/guardians in the affected classroom to encourage them to check their children and to treat, if appropriate, and/or examine other students most likely to have had direct head to head contact with the affected student.

Students should return to school within one day after being identified as having live lice. The parent/guardian should bring the child to the office to determine if the child is eligible to return to class. Absences greater than one day shall be considered an unexcused absence.

Affected students shall be discouraged from direct head to head contact with other students. The nurse or designee shall provide in-service education to staff regarding how to handle nits and/or lice in the classroom.

Information about head lice shall be sent home to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.

Staff shall maintain the privacy of students identified as having head lice.

(Harvard School of Public Health, Laboratory of Public Health Entomology)

(American Academy of Pediatrics)

(National Association of School Nurses)

(cf. 5141.3 - Health Examinations)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

~~(cf. 4119.23/4219.23/4319.23 - Unauthorized Release of Confidential/Privileged Information)~~

BIOLOGY OF HEAD LICE

- Nits are the small yellowish-white, oval shaped eggs that are attached (glued) to the side of a hair shaft.
- Nits must be laid by live lice. You cannot catch nits.
- It takes 7-10 days for a nit to hatch and another 7-10 days for the female to mature and begin laying eggs.
- Head lice are clear in color when hatched, and then quickly develop a reddish-brown color after feeding.
- Head lice are about the size of a sesame seed.
- Head lice have six legs equipped with claws to grasp the hair.
- Head lice are crawling insects. They cannot hop, jump, or fly.
- Head lice do not thrive on pets.
- Head lice are small, wingless insects which feed on human blood. They need human blood in order to survive.
- Head lice live for approximately 30 days on a host and a female louse may lay up to 100 nits (eggs).
- Head lice off of the human hosts will starve; usually they will not survive for greater than 24 hours off of its host.

TIPS FOR HEAD LICE AND NIT REMOVAL

1. Work under good light, such as a lamp or the natural sunlight from sitting by a window or going outdoors.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles then divide the hair in sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
3. Use a nit removal comb to detect the presence of lice and nits.
4. Using the nit removal comb, go through the section from the scalp to the end of the hair. You can dip the comb into a cup of water, use a paper towel, toothpick, old toothbrush, or dental floss to remove any lice, nits, or debris from the comb between passings.
5. Look through that same section of hair for attached nits (lice eggs) and live lice. Nits are always oval-shaped. While usually grayish-white, they can vary in color. Viable nits are generally laid close to the scalp but can be found anywhere on the hair shaft.
6. Remember, all lice-killing products are pesticides. If you choose to purchase an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully and use with caution. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using lice treatment pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use products that contain lindane. Never use a pesticide on or near the eyes.
7. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in hot dryer. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats. Avoid lice sprays.
8. Bring water to a boil, turn off the heat, and soak combs, brushes, nit removal combs, etc... for 10 minutes.
9. Even under the best of conditions, a few lice or nits may be missed. Use a nit removal comb to screen the infested person every day and regularly thereafter. Seeing a nit or two the next day does not necessarily mean re-infestation. However, be sure to remove them immediately. Being consistent and diligent about screening and manual removal will go a long way toward controlling the problem.
10. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, this may signal that live lice may be on the head. Another thorough manual search is recommended at that time.
11. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the use of Permethrin 1 percent (an insecticide) for the treatment of head lice.