



Scarborough College

HEAD LICE POLICY

This is a whole College policy, including EYFS and the boarding community.

This guidance has been produced to provide Scarborough College staff, parents and children with up to date information regarding the management of head lice in school. The guidance supports information provided by the 'Head Lice Policy and Procedures' document issued by North Yorkshire and York PCT, Public Health and Environmental Group 'Head Lice – evidence based guidelines and recommendations from North Yorkshire Health Protection Unit.

Head lice infection is not primarily a problem of schools, but of the wider community. It is the parents' responsibility to manage the detection and treatment of head lice, Scarborough College will work in a co-operative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

All staff at Scarborough College respect confidentiality and remain sensitive to individual circumstances, we advocate head lice infection is talked about openly and not concealed.

Procedures

General Prevention and Health Education

Information for staff and parents is available from the School Nurse or Public Health England.

In the Event of a Suspected Infection in School

- School Nurse to contact parents/guardians to ask them to check their child's hair for head lice and treat accordingly. Please see Appendix 1
- Refer parents/guardians to NHS Choices or Public Health England for treatment guidance or Appendix 2 and 3

In the Event of Confirmed Infection

- Parents/guardians to be reminded that all members of the household should check themselves and if live lice are found they should be treated as soon as possible. The child does not normally need to be sent home.

Acknowledgments

- NHS Choices

Policy Prepared by:
Linda Pinkney – Registered Nurse

Person Responsible for Updates	Date Last Reviewed	Next Review Due
Linda Pinkney	September 2023	July 2024

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parents/Guardians

Head lice are a common part of childhood and we recognise it can be stressful treating head lice and frustrating if recurrent infections occur. Head lice are not primarily a school problem but one within the whole community so please help our combined effort to reduce the incidence of head lice in school.

We have enclosed an information leaflet about the detection and treatment of head lice infections. We advise all family members to check hair weekly as part of their normal personal hygiene routine, good hair care will not prevent head lice infection/infestation but may help to identify head lice at an early stage and so help control the spread of the infection/infestation.

Please remember only treat infection when live lice are detected, repellent sprays are not recommended and are ineffective.

If you would like further advice, information or support please contact the School Nurse.

Yours sincerely

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School Nurse

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Appendix 2

Head Lice - The Facts?

Head lice are small insects with six legs, they are usually the size of a pin head and rarely get bigger than a sesame seed.

Head lice live on or very close to the scalp and feed by biting the scalp and sucking the blood. The female louse lives for about a month, laying 4-6 eggs a day. These are glued to hairs where the warmth of the scalp will hatch them out in 7-10 days.

Head lice do not jump from head to head or indeed from head to objects. They are only transmitted by direct, prolonged (more than one minute) head to head contact.

Transmission of head lice in a classroom is relatively rare. When it does occur, it is usually from a best friend.

Nits are empty or dead egg cases that are often found further along the hair shaft as the hair grows out. They are a good indicator that lice are about, but not proof that someone is infected.

All types of hair can be infected by head lice and adults as well as children can be infected.

Head lice will not be eradicated in the foreseeable future, but a sensible informed approach, based on fact not mythology, will help limit the problem.

At any one time most schools will have a few children who have active infection. This is often between 0% - 5%, rarely more.

The *perception* of parents is often that there is a serious "outbreak" with many children infected. This is hardly ever the case. The "outbreak" is often an outbreak of alarm and agitation, not infection.

Appendix 3

Treat head lice as soon as you spot them.

You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day.

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

Equipment:

Detection comb, disposable paper plain kitchen towel, shampoo, conditioner and good lighting.

Wet combing

- Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing
- Wash hair with ordinary shampoo
- Apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do)
- Comb the whole head of hair, from the roots to the ends
- Wipe the comb on the kitchen towel which will catch all lice and eggs

It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20 to 30 minutes for long, frizzy or curly hair.

Do wet combing on days 1, 5, 9 and 13 to catch any newly hatched head lice. Check again that everyone's hair is free of lice on day 17.

You cannot prevent head lice

There's nothing you can do to prevent head lice.

You can help stop them spreading by wet or dry combing regularly to catch them early.

Do not use medicated lotions and sprays to prevent head lice. They can irritate the scalp.

There's no need for children to stay off school or to wash laundry on a hot wash.