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## **Head Lice Protocol**

While head lice continue to cause concern, they do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Managing cases of head lice in the schools should be based on scientifically and medically justified evidence. This protocol will standardize our approach across the district and have it reflect evidence-based practice.

The following protocol reflects a review of research and position papers by the Center for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, The Harvard School of Public Health, and the National Association of School Nurses.

1. If live lice are discovered or nits are found in an untreated student the parent is notified and given treatment guidelines. Parents should be advised to treat that same day. The parent has the option of picking up the child right away or getting them at the next natural break (i.e., lunch or the end of the day). The parent is advised to notify close contacts of the child.
2. If nits are found but no live lice in an already treated student, an individual assessment is made and the parent is advised of the condition and counseled to check the child for the development of infestation.
3. Upon initial outbreak, notification may be sent to the parents/guardians of the grade involved, detailing how to check for and treat lice. The identity of the child or children involved is kept confidential.
4. A student that has been found to have head lice may return to school after receiving appropriate treatment and being evaluated by the school nurse. Periodic evaluations will be done on an as needed basis determined by the school nurse.
5. The school nurse will screen close contacts and siblings of affected students. No mass screenings will be conducted.
6. Alert custodians to vacuum classroom rugs/upholstery if applicable.
7. Provide school wide information on the identification, treatment and prevention of lice infestation at the beginning of the school year and as needed.

Through education, this approach will ease anxiety caused by head lice, reduce unnecessary school absences, limit embarrassment of students, eliminate ineffective and disruptive classroom/grade mass screenings, and decrease unnecessary exposure to potentially toxic chemicals to treat head lice.







