



HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

200.20

Adopted:	April 21, 2001
Last Reviewed/Revised:	January 26, 2021
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	2023-2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDSB) recognizes that most outbreaks of pediculosis (head lice) occur in school children, particularly those of elementary school age. Pediculosis does not spread infection nor is it a health or education issue. However, they are a societal problem with substantial costs. While control of pediculosis is ultimately a family responsibility, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has a role in educating staff and families on the recognition, early treatment, prevention, and control of head lice infestation. In partnership with the counties' Health Units, the BHNCDSB encourages families to share responsibility for pediculosis control. The Board also has a role in preventing the spread of pediculosis by following precautions at school, which help to minimize the spread in the schools. The treatment and eradication of head lice is ultimately the parent(s)/guardian(s)' responsibility. Early recognition and treatment in the home is paramount to prevention and control of head lice infestation. Students with Head Lice or nits will be excused from mandatory class attendance to allow for a full course of treatment and avoid close head-to-head activities. A child's academic programming will not be interrupted or negatively affected due to being absent from class as a result of treatment.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

This administrative procedure will provide a consistent school response which is necessary to provide education, prevention, and control of Pediculosis.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Principals/Vice-Principals:

Principals/Vice-Principals will ensure that the outbreak of pediculosis is monitored at the school level and dealt with equitably and sensitively to avoid stigmatizing affected families and students.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will ensure regular inspections for head lice and nits and that once pediculosis is discovered, the proper treatment program is followed and repeated, as necessary.

REFERENCES:

- Brant County Health Unit – www.bchu.org
- Canadian Pediatric Society – www.cps.ca
- Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit – hnh.org

FORMS:

- Parent Notification Letter Form A
- Confirmation of Treatment Form B
- Appendix A How to Check for Head Lice
- Appendix B Head Lice Prevention and Treatment



DEFINITIONS:

Pediculosis (Head Lice): Head lice are tiny insects that live only on the scalp of human beings where they lay eggs. They are the size of a pinhead. They do not have wings so they cannot fly or jump, and they are not found on cats, dogs, or any other household pet. The bites from head lice cause itching and scratching. Scratching may cause sores which can get infected.

Nits: The eggs that lice lay are called nits. These look like tiny yellow, tan, or brown dots before they hatch. Lice lay nits on hair shafts close to the scalp, where the temperature is perfect for keeping warm until they hatch. Nits are half the size of a pinhead. They stick to the hair and do not fall off if you touch them. After the eggs have hatched, the shells are white. These empty shells stay on the hair, as the hair grows.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1.0 Action Plan

By September of every school year, elementary school principals must have an action plan that educates families in the prevention and recognition of both head lice and nits and a plan to respond to cases of pediculosis.

Communication should occur throughout the school year through regular school communications to remind parents to check their child's hair before the child returns to school from regular school breaks. Information Brochures (PDFs) are available from both health units.

Each plan must include the following:

- An annual regular procedure for informing parents about pediculosis;
- A process for pediculosis screening; and
- A clear re-admission procedure requiring that the student has been inspected for head lice and nits.

2.0 Reports of Pediculosis

Following the discovery or report of pediculosis, the Principal shall take the following steps:

1. The student is isolated, and parents/guardians will pick up the student as soon as possible. Students are not to be sent home on a school bus.
2. A general letter (Appendix "A" and Appendix "C") shall be sent home with each person affected and to any other groups deemed necessary by the Principal. As well, all staff who have worked with the person having pediculosis, or that has been in the immediate vicinity of the person with pediculosis, shall be notified.
3. A "Confirmation of Treatment Form" (Appendix "B") shall also be sent home to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student having pediculosis advising them of the policy on control of head lice and nits and the requirements to complete the form. This form is to be returned to the Principal prior to the student returning to class.
4. Elementary students who are found to have head lice or nits will be excused from mandatory class attendance to allow for a full course of treatment (and repeated treatments as necessary) and to avoid close head-to-head activities.
5. Secondary students with head lice or nits will be excused from mandatory class attendance to allow for a full course of treatment and avoid close head-to-head activities.
6. Any absence from class as a result of treatment will not interrupt or negatively affect the student's academic program.
7. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will bring the child to school and remain while the student is examined by a trained person prior to re-admission.
8. If the student is still found to have head lice or nits, he/she will continue to be excused so that treatment can be re-administered (in some cases, if nits/shells are found, that doesn't mean that the child is still infested).
9. Staff with Head Lice or nits will be excused from regular teaching duties to allow for a full course of treatment and avoid close head-to-head activities.



10. Staff who have contracted Pediculosis from the workplace have the right to apply for benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act by reporting the incident to their Principal/Supervisor, who will complete the accident and injury report.
11. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure staff assigned to complete checks has been instructed on how to do so. Personnel should be established at the start of the school year. Appendix "C" and consultation with the appropriate Health Unit may be used as a reference for instructing on the proper method for checking for the existence of head lice. The Brant and Haldimand/Norfolk Health Units can provide training to individuals at the school-level for detecting lice.
12. Principals may instruct lunch monitors on how to assist in these checks.
13. The Principal is to ensure checks are completed of the hair of students in a class where head lice and/or nits have been discovered and the hair of the siblings of the student identified with head lice that attend the same school.
14. The principal has the final decision regarding the presence of head lice or nits.

3.0 Confidentiality

The dignity and wellbeing of students shall be given the highest priority. Every attempt will be made to respect the student's privacy and self-esteem. All who assist in this process must maintain confidentiality.

4.0 Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to learn how to identify head lice and nits and make the checking of hair a part of regular hygiene. If pediculosis is identified, the parent is responsible for ensuring treatment is administered and a Confirmation of Treatment Form (Form B) is completed and returned to the Principal.

5.0 Environmental Decontamination

- In some rare situations, significant infestation of a particular classroom may occur. The Canadian Pediatric Society has confirmed that environmental cleaning or disinfection following the detection of a head lice case is not normally warranted. Lice and nits live close to the scalp and do not survive for more than 1-2 days, away from the scalp. Nits are unlikely to hatch at room temperature away from the scalp.
- Washing items in close or prolonged contact with the head (e.g., hats, pillowcases, stuffed toys, towels, brushes, combs) may be warranted. Wash such items in hot water ($\geq 66^{\circ}\text{C}$) and dry them in a hot dryer for 15 minutes. Schools may decide to store any items that cannot be easily cleaned in a sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks which will kill both live lice and nits.
- Any head gear, headphones etc. are not permitted for communal use. Students are required to purchase their own headphones/headsets, place them in a Ziploc bag (labelled) and not to be shared. If items are required to be shared, they must be cleaned and disinfected with Lysol or rubbing alcohol before being issued to other students.
- It is not ever advised to use insecticides. A Virex disinfectant is used to clean surfaces (including tables, chairs, work centres, etc). A Lysol spray can be used for carpets, upholstered furniture, pillows, etc.
- Vacuum all floors, rugs, pillows, carpet squares, and upholstered furniture.
- Hard surfaced classroom floors are not a risk in the transmission of head lice and no special anti-lice measures are required.
- Depending on the severity of the infestation, the type of classroom and other specific circumstances, the principal in consultation with the Superintendent may close the infested classroom for a maximum of 3 consecutive days.

6.0 Re-Admission Procedure

If the student has been treated for pediculosis and is free of live head lice and nits, he/she may return to class the following conditions have been met:

- i) Student checks in and remains at the office with their parent(s)/guardian(s) while the re-admission protocol is put into place;



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- ii) Confirmation of Treatment Form is confirmed completed and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), indicating that all conditions have been met;
- iii) Trained person examines the student and detects no live head lice and/or a number of nits; and
- iv) Staff will create a log to keep track of cases.

Student Name	Grade	Date Detected	Form Sent (✓)	Form Returned (✓)	Re-Entry Date
Jane Smith	2	May 26 th , 2020	✓	✓	September 8 th , 2020

If the student is still found to have live head lice and/or a number of nits, he/she will be excused so that treatment can be re-administered.



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Administrative Procedure Head Lice/Pediculosis

Appendix "A"

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Parents:

It has been reported that children in this school have Pediculosis (head lice and/or nits). Please do not be alarmed by this notice. It is by no means a statement regarding the cleanliness of any child, their family or their household.

Please examine the head of your child(ren) for nits every night for the next three to four weeks. If nits are found, all other family members should be checked. Follow the directions below to get rid of the head lice.

What to Look For:

*In very bright light look behind the ears, near the neck, and close to the scalp for small insects moving in the hair (lice), and small eggs (called nits) that are attached to the hair near the scalp. Nits are very tiny eggs, half the size of a pinhead and oval in shape. They may look like dandruff but they are firmly glued to the hair and cannot be flicked off. New eggs, which are close to the scalp, are tan coloured and are difficult to see. Nits that are farther away from the scalp appear white.

How to Get Rid of Head Lice:

Head lice products kill many of the nits, but not all of them. Treating Pediculosis requires two treatments one week apart. Lice shampoo products have been shown to be the most effective method for getting rid of head lice. Before using any head lice shampoo product, read the product inserts and carefully follow the instructions on the package. Remove all of the nits. Apply a second treatment in one week. Continue to check the head and remove any remaining nits.

To Remove Nits:

Work in a brightly lit area – bright sunlight is best. After treatment, comb and part the hair in small sections. Use your thumbnail against your first finger to strip the nits from the hair starting from the roots right down to the tips. Place the nits in a bag and throw them out. You can also comb out the nits holding a fine-tooth comb on a downward angle. Special combs are available at the drugstore.

Please notify the school if head lice or nits are found.

I hope that by working together, we can eliminate this nuisance from our school.

(Signature of Principal)



(School Letterhead)

CONFIRMATION OF TREATMENT FORM

(Date)

Your child, _____, has been found to have head lice and/or nits in his/her hair. If individual cases at school are not controlled, a significant outbreak could potentially occur. Consequently he/she will be excused from mandatory class attendance until treatment is completed and all head lice and/or nits have been removed.

Once treatment has been completed and you have removed the nits and cases, your child may return to class. Please complete this form and return it with your child and continue to carry out your daily checks.

Thank you for your diligence in this matter. I hope that by working together, we can eliminate head lice and nits from our school.

- | | | | |
|---|--|-----|----|
| 1 | I have read the information provided. | YES | NO |
| 2 | A prescribed pediculosis treatment has been used.
Name of product: _____ | YES | NO |
| 3 | Nit (egg) removal has been done. | YES | NO |
| 4 | A daily nit check will be done for 10 days. | YES | NO |
| 5 | A repeat of the treatment after 7 days has been done or is planned. | YES | NO |
| 6 | Environmental treatment has been done or is planned.
(Follow recommended protocols from Public Health for cleaning items that have been in contact with the infested hair.) | YES | NO |

If you need assistance with the treatment instructions, please call the Brant County Health Unit or Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit and ask the Intake Nurse for information.

By signing this form, you confirm that your child has been successfully treated and is ready to re-enter school.

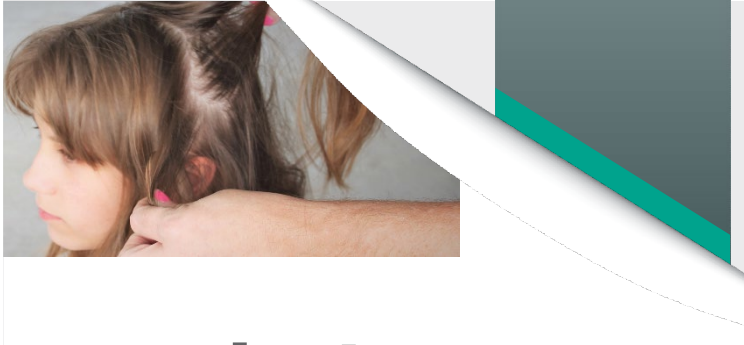
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date



How to Check for Head Lice:

- ✓ Examine the head under natural bright light. Head lice may be hard to detect because they move quickly and are very small.
- ✓ It is helpful to examine the head from different angles or light. This is easily achieved by moving around the adult/child while examining. Newly laid eggs are almost transparent.
- ✓ Part the hair and closely examine the scalp, especially the nape of the neck and behind the ears.
- ✓ To find the eggs, look for small white or yellowish-brown specks that are about the size of a pinhead poppy seed. You may see lice quickly moving away from the sunlight.
- ✓ To tell the difference between eggs and dandruff, try to dislodge them from the hair shaft. If they are not easily removed, they are probably eggs.



Head Lice Prevention & Treatment

What you should know about head lice

Lice, like ants at a picnic, are a part of nature. We dislike them and don't want them in our hair or in our home.

Lice have three stages – the egg (nit), the nymph and the adult.

- Nits are whitish-grey or tan and approximately the size of a grain of sand. Head lice lay their eggs on the hair shaft very close to the scalp with a waterproof "glue." This **makes it difficult to wash them off or brush them out like dandruff.**
- Nymphs are baby lice. They look like adult lice but smaller.
- Adult lice are approximately the size of a sesame seed. They have six legs and are usually tan, grayish white or brown in colour. Lice **move quickly and can be difficult to see.**



Lice do not jump, fly, swim, or live on pets such as cats and dogs.

Lice are a nuisance but are not a health concern. They do not cause illness or disease.

The good news is that lice can be managed...and removed. There are ways and treatment options and steps you can take to stop lice from spreading.

How do I know if my child has lice?

- tickling or itchy feeling on the head
- feeling something moving in the hair
- frequent scratching of the head

In very bright light, look for lice and nits (lice eggs):

- close to the scalp
- around the ears
- near the forehead
- near the base of the neck

Live lice can be seen moving in the hair close to the scalp. Nits (lice eggs) can be seen close to the scalp attaching to the hair stand.

NOTE: Unlike dandruff, nits don't easily move and need to be removed using a comb or your fingernail.



Administrative Procedure Head Lice/Pediculosis

How to prevent lice from spreading

To prevent getting head lice, avoid direct hair-to-hair contact with others and wear long hair tied up.

Do **NOT** share personal items such as:

- brushes and combs
- hair bands, ties, and elastics
- headphones
- hats or helmets
- scarves or towels

If someone in your home is found to have head lice, check all other family members for lice as well.

Treating Head Lice

Lice shampoo products have been shown to be **the most effective method for getting rid of head lice**.

Before using any head lice shampoo product, read the product inserts and carefully follow the instructions on the package. In some cases, multiple applications may be required to completely remove the lice.

For information about various shampoo options, or if you have questions about how to use the product, ask your pharmacist.

Other Treatments

Some people suggest home remedies for head lice, such as mayonnaise, petroleum jelly, olive oil, vinegar, mineral oil or tea tree oil. There is no evidence that products such as these, work to **effectively treat head lice**.

NEVER USE WD-40, gasoline, kerosene or any other **flammable liquid to treat head lice**. These products do not work to remove or prevent lice, but they can pose a serious risk to health.



Where to Buy Lice Products

Head lice shampoo or crème rinse treatment products are available at most pharmacies.

People who receive government funding through Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) can get lice treatment products for low or no cost from pharmacies with a prescription.

People who have health care benefits through their employer can ask for a prescription from their doctor to get a lice treatment product for a low cost.





Alternative option: Wetcombing

- Note:**
- There is limited evidence that wet combing works all on its own to completely get rid of head lice. It is not recommended as a primary treatment, but can be **effective when combined with lice shampoo treatment.**
 - Some people may not be able to use medicated shampoo treatments (e.g. due to a medical condition, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding). If this is the case, wet-combing of the hair is a non-chemical way to attempt to treat head lice.
 - **Wet combing is done by using a fine-toothed metal comb designed specifically to remove nits and lice from** hair strands while the hair is wet with water and/or regular hair conditioner. It needs to be done **EVERY FOUR DAYS FOR 14 DAYS to be effective.**
 - Wet combing requires time and commitment for the routine to be successful. You may need to dedicate 30 minutes to one hour of time depending on the child's hair.
 - Nit combs can be purchased at a pharmacy for approximately \$5 - \$10.



Wet combing method

1. Collect all equipment; lice comb, hair conditioner, hair clips and small brush.
2. Drape a plastic apron around the neck of the person being treated. A large **garbage bag with a hole cut in the bottom to fit** over the head will also work.
3. Find a brightly lit area near a window, or have the **child sit near a lamp or use a flashlight to see the scalp well.**
4. Have the child sit on a non-upholstered surface, like a plastic or wood chair.
5. Wet hair fully with water, pat dry and add regular hair conditioner (this makes combing easier). Do not rinse conditioner out of hair.
6. Separate hair into small sections, starting at one side of the head, and slowly work toward the other side.
7. Using the lice comb, place the comb against the scalp at the top of the head. Pull the comb slowly **and firmly on an angle from scalp to the end of** the hair strand.
8. Remove and any lice, nits, nymphs, eggshells found in the comb using a small brush.





9. Rinse the lice comb in hot water after each stroke of hair.
10. Repeat combing until no lice, nits or eggs are found in the comb. Clip the combed cleaned hair away from non-combed hair.
11. Repeat this process until every section of hair has been combed.
12. Once combing is complete you may shampoo with regular shampoo OR use a head lice shampoo and follow the package instructions.
13. Repeat this process every four days for 14 days until no live lice, nits, or shells are found in the hair.



Cleaning Your Home

Lice can't live longer than approximately 24 hours on non-human surfaces like carpets, **hardwood floors, clothing, and furniture.** **However, if you have identified lice in your home, isolate and wash those items and areas within at least 72 hours.**

Pay special attention to items that directly touch the head such as hats, pillowcases, car seat covers, combs and brushes. Wash these items in hot water and dry them in a hot dryer for at least 15 minutes, or store the items in an airtight plastic bag for two weeks.

Call your health care provider if....

Your child is under 2 years old
Has a seizure disorder
Has lice or nits on the eyebrows and eyelashes

Has open sores or wounds on the scalp
Has allergies

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, call Motherisk at 416-813-6780 for more information.



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