



## Head Lice (Pediculosis)

#200.20

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Adopted:	April 21, 2001
Last Reviewed/Revised:	May 27, 2025
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	March 2028

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### POLICY STATEMENT:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB) recognizes pediculosis does not spread infection nor is it a health or education issue. While control of pediculosis is ultimately a family responsibility, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has a role in educating and supporting staff and families on the recognition, early treatment, prevention, and control of head lice infestation. In partnership with the counties' Health Units, the BHNCD SB encourages families to share responsibility for pediculosis control. The responsibility for treating and eliminating head lice ultimately rests with the parent(s) or caregiver(s). A child's academic program will continue without interruption or negative impact despite the diagnosis of live head lice or the presence of nits.

### APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

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

### REFERENCES:

- Grand Erie Public Health Unit – [www.bchu.org](http://www.bchu.org)
- Canadian Pediatric Society – [www.cps.ca](http://www.cps.ca)

### APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – How to Check for Head Lice
- Appendix B – Confirmation of Treatment Form
- Appendix C – Public Health Fact Sheet

### DEFINITIONS:

**Pediculosis (Head Lice):** Head lice are tiny, parasitic insects that live exclusively on the human scalp, where they lay eggs (nits). Adult lice are about the size of a sesame seed (2-3 mm). They do not have wings, so they cannot fly or jump, but they can crawl quickly from hair to hair. Head lice are not found on pets such as cats or dogs. Their bites can cause itching due to an allergic reaction to their saliva, and excessive scratching may lead to sores or secondary infections.

**Nits:** The eggs that lice lay are called nits. They are tiny, oval-shaped, and appear yellow, tan, or translucent before they hatch. Lice attach nits to hair shafts close to the scalp, where warmth helps them develop. Nits are about 0.8 mm in size and are firmly glued to the hair, making them difficult to remove. After hatching, the remaining empty egg casings appear white or clear and remain attached to the hair as it 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.

#### Each plan must include the following:

- An annual, regular procedure for informing parent(s)/caregiver(s) about pediculosis (e.g., using content from Appendix C).
- Consistent communication throughout the school year via regular school updates, reminding parents to check their child's hair before returning to school after scheduled breaks.
- Recognition of the sensitive/personal nature of checking for head lice/nits with children. The dignity and well-being of students will 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 will maintain confidentiality.
- A process for checking for head lice and informing parents/caregivers about treatment, and re-entry requirements.
- Provision for schoolwork to be provided where a student's re-admission is delayed.
- The administrator has the final decision regarding the re-admission of students.

### 2.0 Reports of Pediculosis

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

#### 1. Notification and Communication:

- Refer to the process for pediculosis screening in the school action plan.
- Parents/guardians of affected students will be notified as soon as possible via phone and Appendix A and B.
- Staff members who have worked closely with the affected student(s) shall also be informed and reminded of the duty to maintain confidentiality.

#### 2. Student Attendance and Treatment Expectations:

- Students identified with head lice may remain in school for the remainder of the day and should not be isolated or sent home immediately.
- Parents/guardians will be advised to begin treatment promptly and ensure their child's hair is checked and properly managed before returning to school the next day.
- Secondary students are also expected to remain in school and follow the same treatment protocols.

#### 3. Re-admission to Class:

- Students do not need to be completely nit-free to return to school, as the presence of nits alone does not indicate active infestation.
- Affected students will not face academic penalties or exclusions due to pediculosis.
- Parents/guardians must follow through with a full course of treatment and continue checking their child's hair regularly.
- Confirmation of Treatment Form (Appendix B) must be completed and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), indicating that all conditions have been met.



4. **Staff Considerations:**

- Staff who believe they may have contracted Pediculosis from the workplace must inform their Principal/Supervisor, submit an incident injury report, and can submit an application for benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

5. **Education and Prevention Strategies:**

- The Principal will ensure staff, students, and parents receive information on best practices for lice prevention and treatment as per their school action plan.

6. **Decision-Making Authority:**

- The Principal has the final decision regarding school-based lice management protocols in consultation with public health authorities as needed.

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.



### How to Check for Head Lice

- ✓ **Choose a Well-Lit Area**
  - Examine the head under bright, natural light, as head lice are small and move quickly, making them difficult to detect.
- ✓ **Inspect from Different Angles**
  - Move around the individual while checking to observe the scalp from various perspectives.
  - Newly laid eggs (nits) are nearly transparent, so changing angles can help in spotting them.
- ✓ **Focus on Key Areas**
  - Part the hair and carefully inspect the scalp, paying close attention to:
    - The nape of the neck
    - Behind the ears
- ✓ **Identify Lice and Eggs (Nits)**
  - Look for small white or yellowish-brown specks, about the size of a poppy seed.
  - Lice may move quickly away from the light.
- ✓ **Distinguish Nits from Dandruff**
  - Try to remove the specks from the hair shaft:
    - **Dandruff** will flake off easily.
    - **Nits** will cling tightly to the hair strand and are harder to remove.



**CONFIRMATION OF TREATMENT FORM**

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has been identified as having head lice and/or nits. If individual cases in the school are not effectively managed, a significant outbreak could occur. As a result, your child will be excused from attending class until appropriate treatment for head lice has been completed.

Once treatment is complete your child may return to school. Please complete this form and send it with your child upon their return. Additionally, we encourage you to continue conducting daily checks to prevent re-infestation.

Thank you for your cooperation. By working together, we can help eliminate head lice and nits from our school community.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Head Lice

## What are head lice?

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the scalp, where they lay eggs. They do not jump, fly, swim, or live on cats or dogs.

Head lice are common in school aged children. They are not a health concern or a communicable disease. They are also not associated with illness or poor hygiene.

## Symptoms

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

## How do I know if my child has lice?

In very bright light look behind ears, near the neck and close to the scalp for small insects moving in hair (lice), and small eggs (called nits) that are attached to the hair near the scalp.

## How to prevent lice

Lice spread from one person to another when there is close head-to-head contact or when items that have touched the hair of someone who has lice are shared.

Do not share personal items such as:

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

## Treatment of Head Lice

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

Head lice treatment products are available for free for Ontario residents 24 years or younger through OHIP and not covered under a private plan. Families would have to visit a doctor to receive a prescription.

Before using any head lice shampoo product, read the product inserts and carefully follow the instructions on the package.

For non-chemical treatment options, speak to your doctor, pharmacist or health care provider.

Also, speak to your health care provider if your child has head lice and:

- is under 2 years old
- has a seizure disorder
- has lice or nits on their eyebrows and eyelashes
- has open sores or wounds on the scalp
- has allergies

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, call your doctor for more information.

## Cleaning Your Home

Head lice can live up to 24 hours off the head. 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.

*Reference: Head lice infestations: A clinical update, Canadian Pediatric Society, September, 2016*

**BRANT COUNTY  
HEALTH UNIT**



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