



St. Jérôme Church of England  
Bilingual School

# Head Lice Policy

Sept 2018

Executive Headteacher.....

Revd D. R. Norris

Chair of the Governing Body.....

Ian Fernandes

Date:~

## 1. Introduction

This policy reflects guidance from the following bodies:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence website address <http://cks.nice.org.uk/> dated Feb 2015

The UK government website; Public Health England at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) dated April 2013

NHS Choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) dated May 2016

British Association of Dermatologists leaflet "Head lice" at <http://www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/patient-information-leaflets/head-lice> dated May 2017

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

2:1 Empower parents & staff to work together to reduce the spread of head lice in school by

- Learning about head lice
- Explaining and increasing confidence in how to detect head lice
- Reducing parents' anxiety about head lice and the inappropriate stigma attached
- Recommending where to find more information

2:2 Explain the procedure that the school takes in keeping our families informed of head lice outbreaks

2:3 Explain the procedure when, occasionally, a member of staff becomes aware during the course of the school day that a child is suffering from an infestation of live lice

2:4 Rarely to safeguard children against long term infestation and its consequences

## 3. Some information about head lice

(According to British Association of Dermatologists leaflet entitled "Head lice")

### What are head lice?

Head lice are very common. They are small (adult lice are the size of a sesame seed) grey-brown insects that live only on human scalps. They cannot fly or jump; neither can they burrow into the scalp. They can affect anyone, with long or short hair, no matter how clean the hair is.

### How are head lice acquired?

Head lice are usually picked up by head-to-head contact; it takes about 30 seconds for a single louse to transfer from one scalp to another. Less often, sharing hats, combs or pillows can spread them. Head lice live only on humans and die in a day or two away from the human scalp. They cannot be caught from animals.

Head lice can affect anyone, but are:

- Most common in children between the ages of 4 and 11
- More common in girls than boys
- Most often found at the start of the school year

### **What are the symptoms of head lice infestation?**

Head lice have to feed on human blood several times a day to survive, and their bites, saliva and faeces often make the scalp itchy. Some people may be unaware they have head lice as they do not experience the itch and other symptoms. This lack of itching does not mean that lice are not present, and the only way to be sure is by taking a careful look at the scalp. If the skin becomes infected with the bacteria that cause impetigo, the scalp may become sore and children may have a raised temperature and feel unwell.

### **What does a louse-infested scalp look like?**

Female lice live for up to 40 days, during which time they can lay more than 100 eggs. They attach their eggs (known as nits) to hairs close to the scalp surface. The eggs are yellow or white, and the size of a pin head. They take 7 to 10 days to hatch, and the new lice can then lay more eggs after about 7 days. The eggs that still contain unborn lice usually lie within half a centimeter of the scalp surface. Empty egg cases remain firmly stuck to the hairs and become further away from the scalp as the hair grows.

An affected scalp carries a mixture of the following:

- Eggs containing developing lice – firmly stuck to the hair shafts near to the scalp
- Empty egg cases – also firmly stuck to the hairs, but further from the scalp surface
- Immature lice
- An average of 10 adult lice, though some scalps carry many more
- Louse droppings – most easily seen as dark specks on pillows or clothing

Some of the above are difficult to see. Immature lice are small and seldom found, and adult lice can also be hard to spot unless the infestation is a heavy one. Empty egg cases are white, and so show up more easily than eggs that have not yet hatched; all are most obvious on the sides and back of the scalp.

Other features of a head lice infestation can include scratch marks, and a sticky weeping scalp, Small itchy pink bumps around the edge of the scalp, particularly on the back of the neck, enlarged glands in the neck, and impetigo (bacterial infection).

<http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?id=207&itemtype=document>

#### **4. St Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School statement:**

**4:1 We recommend that parents routinely, every week or two, use detection combing in order to find head lice before they multiply and/or spread to others**

Below is an excerpt from the NHS Choices website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)):

The only way to be certain that you or your child have head lice is to find a live louse. Spotting head lice in hair can be very difficult, so it's best to try to comb them out with a detection comb.

Detection combs are special fine-toothed plastic combs that you can buy from your local pharmacy, supermarket or online. A comb with flat-faced teeth and a tooth spacing of 0.2-0.3mm is best.

Detection combing can be carried out on dry or wet hair. Dry combing takes less time, but wet combing is more accurate because washing with conditioner stops head lice moving.

## Wet detection combing

To use the wet detection method:

- Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner.
- Use an ordinary, wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb.
- Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down from the roots to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice each time – remove lice by wiping the comb with tissue paper or rinsing it.
- Work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Do this at least twice to help ensure you haven't missed any areas and continue until you find no more lice.

If you find head lice, you should check the rest of your family. Treat everyone found to have head lice on the same day.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Diagnosis.aspx>

**4:2 If head lice are detected children do not need to be kept off school and treatment should be commenced as soon as possible.**

If head lice are detected please commence treatment. You can click on the following link to see the helpful pictures and advice about treatment

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

**The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance is quoted below;**

“The choice of treatment will depend on the preference of the individual or their parents/carer (after considering the advantages and disadvantages of each treatment) and what has been previously tried. Wet combing or dimeticone 4% lotion is recommended first-line for pregnant or breastfeeding women, young children aged 6 months to 2 years, and people with asthma or eczema”

<http://cks.nice.org.uk/head-lice#!scenario>

**Please seek advice from your pharmacist for treatment for your child and your family**

## **5 St Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School CEPS Responsibilities**

5:1 The school will make information about head lice and treatment easily available within this document and links.

5:2 If, in the course of a day, a member of staff becomes aware that a child obviously has live lice in their hair a member of staff will telephone the child's parent/carer to reassuringly inform them and to direct them to the information in this document asking them to commence treatment after school as soon as possible to prevent spread the following day when the child returns to school.

5:3 Whenever the school becomes aware that a child has recently had live lice in their hair the school office will send to all school families a letter asking that the children's hair be checked using detection combing technique.

5:4 When a child has a long term persistent infestation of live lice and the Head of School is concerned that the family may need some support in caring for the child, the school will consider the need to discuss this further with parents/carers.

## **6 Parents' responsibilities**

6:1 We ask that parents regularly carry out detection combing

6:2 We ask that parents inform us during term time when they have found live lice in their child's hair so that we can inform the parents/carers of class members

6:3 We ask that parents commence treatment as soon as possible after they have found live lice in their child's hair so that the risk of passing it on to others is eliminated

## **7 Monitoring and review**

7.1 The Head of School and the Welfare Officer will monitor the head lice policy as part of the monitoring cycle. Findings and recommendations will be reported to the full governing body.