

Ashgrove Primary School

Policy for

The
Treatment of
Head Lice

1 January 2005

VERSION 1:1

The Treatment of Head Lice

Rationale

The Northern Ireland regional policy for the control of head lice was introduced on 24 March 1999 and reflects recently issued national guidance. The North Eastern Education and Library Board, Homefirst Community Trust, Causeway Health and Social Services Trust and the Department of Public Health Medicine, NHSSB subsequently issued guidelines.

Head lice are described in the regional policy as a problem of the wider community and not primarily a problem of schools. Ashgrove Primary School does, however, recognise that as part of this community it can make a contribution by supporting parents in promoting and maintaining healthy, thriving children.

Principles

- Head lice are a problem of the whole community and are passed on by close family members and friends in the home and neighbourhood as well as in school.
- Head lice are transferred by direct, prolonged, head-to-head contact and while possible in the playground, it is unlikely in the classroom.
- Head lice infestation is not a serious physical health problem.
- Clear diagnosis is important - treatment should only be started if a living, moving louse is discovered.
- The main responsibility for the identification of head lice is that of the parents or guardians. They should identify and treat any head lice problem and seek help from their doctor or health visitor if necessary.

School Procedure

Information to help parents detect and treat suspected cases of head lice will be supplied as part of the school's communication with parents.

Parents are urged, as in all health matters, to seek diagnosis from a medical professional and to treat the problem immediately for the benefit of the child, family and community.

If a member of staff sees a living, moving louse in a child's hair a letter will be sent to the parent. The reply slip should be signed and returned inside two days. If no reply is obtained, the school nurse will be contacted. The nurse may then contact the parents to offer advice and support. Information will remain confidential at all times.

Children who have, or are thought to have, head lice will not be excluded from school.

Ashgrove Primary School

Ashgrove Road, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, BT36 6LJ

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Head Lice

Dear Parent

A case of head lice has been reported to me today. Please check your child's head immediately and, if necessary, treat thoroughly with any lotion recommended by a chemist or doctor. Routine head inspections are no longer carried out in schools but the following may answer some questions:

How do you catch head lice?

- Head lice cannot jump or fly. They like to live close to the scalp. They are only caught when two people's heads are in contact for some time.

How do you know you have got head lice?

- Signs of head lice include: live or dead lice in the hair, nits (empty egg cases), an itchy head, a rash round the neck or ears, dark gritty dust on pillows or collars.

A weekly family check for head lice

- Wash the hair and using a fine-toothed comb (available from chemists), comb the wet hair from the roots over a sheet of white paper. If nits or eggs are found keep combing every other day for a week to ensure that there are no live lice. If one is found, tell those in close contact and begin treatment.

Sometimes head lice "return" because the treatment was not carried out thoroughly and eggs survived.

- Hair should not normally be treated more than twice in three weeks. If the problem persists, speak to the doctor.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Peter B Waddell, Principal

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Dear Parent

It has been reported to me that a head louse was seen in _____'s hair today.

There is no need to be alarmed. We may be wrong, but to avoid embarrassment I would ask you to check your child's hair for yourself using a fine comb and, if required, treat the problem. Your doctor, health visitor or chemist will be able to provide you with further help and support.

As we will treat this matter in confidence there is no need to keep your child off school. I would, however, request that you return the slip below to confirm receipt of this letter.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Peter B Waddell
(Principal)

ASHGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

I have received your letter dated _____ regarding a possible case of head lice. I will check my child's hair and treat any problem.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)