



The Eaglewood School

“Raising Aspiration and Changing Lives”

Head Lice Management and Safeguarding Guidance

1. Introduction

At The Eaglewood School, we are committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all students. Head lice infestations are a common occurrence in schools, and it is important to address this issue in a way that is sensitive, respectful, and effective. This guidance aims to provide guidance on how to manage persistent head lice infestations while minimising the risk of stigma or harm to the affected student and the school community.

2. Definition of Head Lice

Head lice are tiny insects that live in the hair and scalp. They are highly contagious but are not linked to poor hygiene. Head lice can affect anyone and can be easily passed between individuals, especially in close-contact settings like schools.

3. Purpose of the Guidance

This guidance outlines how we will manage persistent head lice infestations in a sensitive, effective, and supportive manner. Our goal is to:

- Minimise the spread of head lice in the school.
- Ensure that students with head lice are treated with dignity and respect.
- Provide guidance to parents/carers on effective treatment and prevention.

4. Confidentiality and Sensitivity

We recognise that head lice infestations can be a source of embarrassment for students and their families. All communications and actions related to head lice will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity. School staff will ensure that affected students are treated with respect, and steps will be taken to avoid any public identification or stigma.

5. Identifying Persistent Infestations

- **Detection:** Head lice may be identified by teachers, school nurses, or other designated staff during regular health checks or when students report issues. However, school staff will not conduct head lice checks unless they are trained to do so.
- **Persistent Infestations:** A persistent infestation is defined as a student who has recurrent head lice despite previous treatments or has had head lice multiple times within a short period. When such an issue arises, additional steps will be taken to support the student and their family.

6. Safeguarding Concern: Lack of Support with Self-Care

- **Potential Safeguarding Concern:** If a student experiences a persistent head lice infestation that is not adequately addressed despite repeated communication with parents/carers it may indicate that the student is not receiving adequate support for self-care or is facing other underlying issues.
- **Vulnerabilities:** A failure to manage or treat head lice could be indicative of wider concerns about a student's personal hygiene or the support they are receiving at home. This may be linked to neglect or other safeguarding concerns where the student is not receiving the necessary care or resources to address their health needs.
- **Actions to Take:** If persistent head lice are identified and no resolution is forthcoming, the school will:
 - Follow up with the parents/carers to discuss the ongoing issue and assess whether additional support is needed.
 - If there are concerns about neglect or inadequate care, the school will follow safeguarding procedures, which may include involving a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) to assess the situation further.

- Offer support for the student, such as referrals to external agencies (e.g., social services or local community health services) if there are concerns that the student is not receiving the care or resources they need to manage the issue.

7. Communication and Parental Involvement

- **Initial Notification:** When a case of head lice is identified, the school will inform the student's parent/carer discreetly and promptly. This may be done through a letter or a private conversation, outlining the situation and offering advice on how to treat the lice.
- **Ongoing Communication:** If the infestation persists, the school will follow up with the parents/carers to ensure that appropriate treatment is being administered and offer further support or advice.
- **Educational Resources:** The school will provide parents/carers with resources and information about effective treatments for head lice, including over-the-counter remedies, combing methods, and prevention strategies.

8. Support and Treatment

- **Guidance for Parents/Carers:** The school will advise parents/carers on how to treat head lice, including recommendations for safe and effective products and techniques.
- **Support for Students:** The school will offer discreet support to students who may be experiencing ongoing issues with head lice, including access to the school nurse for further advice and treatment if necessary.
- **Assistance for Families:** If a family is struggling to afford treatment, the school will provide information on available support or, where appropriate, help in securing treatment options.

9. Exclusion and Return to School

- **School Attendance:** A student with head lice will not be automatically excluded from school. However, repeated or untreated infestations may result in further discussions with the parents/carers about the need for effective treatment.
- **Return to School:** Once treatment has been administered and the head lice have been effectively cleared, students may return to school. Parents/carers should inform the school once treatment has been successful to prevent further cases.

10. Prevention and Awareness

- **Educational Programs:** The school will educate students and parents/carers on how to prevent head lice, including the importance of:
 - Regularly checking for head lice.
 - Avoiding sharing personal items such as hats, combs, and brushes.
 - Identifying early signs of an infestation.
- **Prevention in the Classroom:** Age-appropriate lessons will be provided to students to increase awareness of how head lice are spread and how they can prevent infestation. These lessons will be designed to reduce stigma and ensure students understand that head lice are a common issue.

11. Safeguarding and Well-Being

- **Supportive Environment:** It is essential that students dealing with persistent head lice are not bullied or ostracised by their peers. The school will foster an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of any medical or hygiene-related issues.

- **Mental Health Support:** If a student feels embarrassed or anxious about a head lice infestation, the school will offer mental health support, such as counselling or a trusted staff member to talk to, to help manage any emotional distress.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

- **School Staff:** Teachers, school nurses, and pastoral staff are responsible for identifying head lice cases and ensuring that the school's guidance is followed. They will communicate sensitively with students and parents and ensure that all steps are taken to address the issue discreetly and respectfully.
- **Parents and Carers:** Parents/carers are responsible for treating head lice in a timely manner and informing the school if their child is affected. Parents/carers should work with the school to manage the issue and prevent further infestations.

13. Review and Evaluation

This guidance will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant to the needs of our students. Any changes to the guidance will be communicated to parents and staff in a timely manner.