

Dear Parent or Guardian:

There have been several cases of head lice in your child's class.

Pediculosis, or head lice, is a condition that each year affects approximately six to 12 million children between the ages of three and 12 years of age, and about one in every 100 elementary school children. Head lice are parasites that are generally found on the scalp, around the ears, and at the back of the neck. The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, and can be a reddish brown color. Eggs, or nits, are smaller and silver or white in color. The favorite places for lice to be are behind the ears and at the nape of the neck although they may be anywhere on the scalp. Differentiation between lice and dandruff can be made if the speck can be flicked off the hair shaft, it is dandruff. If it is attached, it is probably lice

Head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene and they do not transmit disease. Transmission from one child to another can occur during direct contact or sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes, caps or helmets.

The most common symptom of head lice is head scratching, particularly at night, although red bite marks may also be noticed. If you suspect that your child has head lice, he or she should be examined by your health care provider. Nit picking with a fine-tooth comb along with safe and effective products are available, both over the counter and by doctor's prescription, to treat this problem. It is important to follow the directions carefully. Parents should also wash in hot water or dry-clean all recently worn clothing, hats, used bedding, and towels. Personal care items such as combs, brushes and hair clips should also be washed in hot water.

My goal as school nurse is to provide you with the information you need to safeguard your child's health, and ensure that his or her education is not disrupted, but remains the most positive experience possible.

Please visit the following websites for more detailed information about lice identification and treatment. I hope you find this information useful, and I send best wishes to your child for a rewarding school year. Students identified with lice will be sent home and must be treated before returning to school. Please have the student report directly to the nurse's office upon reentry to be checked before classes.

For a healthy school,

*Laura Redmond, CSN*

School Nurse

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