

EGUSD Head Lice Policy

Head lice continues to be an ongoing nuisance. While a significant social problem, head lice does not transmit disease to humans. Traditionally, head lice policies/protocols in schools emphasized that a child infested with head lice could not return to school until no nits were found in their hair (“no-nit” policy).

- Many nits are more than ¼ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice or may in fact be empty shells known as castings.
- Nits stick to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families, and school communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel.

The essentials of a “no-live lice” policy are as follows:

1. Implementation of head lice surveillance and control procedures are based upon current scientific research and best practice.
2. School staff is trained by the credentialed school nurse in head lice detection and management procedures.
3. Information about head lice infestation is to be shared on a “need to know” basis as deemed appropriate by the credentialed school nurse.
4. Maintaining confidentiality of the student information is in compliance with FERPA.

The goals of the EGUSD “no-live lice” policy:

1. Decrease school absenteeism.
2. Maintain student privacy.
3. Support families in their efforts to control and eliminate live head lice.
4. Provide staff and families on evidenced-based lice management and EGUSD Head Lice Policy through school newsletters twice a year.

When a student is found to have *live head lice*:

- Distribute parent notification: letter with information related to detection and elimination of live head lice.
- The credentialed school nurse will provide the notification letter.
- The student is sent home from school.
- The parent is informed of treatment options.
- Treated before returning to school.
- **Student’s head checked upon return to school by credentialed school nurse or designated school staff trained by credentialed school nurse.**
- If live head lice are found the process of notification to parents/guardians begins again.
- If the student has siblings, all sibling(s) attending the school site will be checked.
- If the student has other siblings (not in the immediate school), notify the parent/guardian and recommend precautionary measures to avoid family infestation.
- **Full Classroom screenings for head lice are NOT done:** “Current evidence does not support the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of classroom or school-wide screening for decreasing the incidence of head lice among children“ (per CDC, May 2007). The classroom is only one of many environments where head lice can be transmitted.

- The credentialed school nurse will maintain a head lice log for the school site. School site staff will notify the credentialed school nurse when a student on campus has been identified to have live lice.

Environmental Control:

- Encourage students to avoid sharing hats, combs, coats, pillows, or other personal items.
- No environmental pesticide treatments (pesticide bombs) are to be used.
- Girls with long hair may want to wear their hair in “contained” hair styles (ponytails, buns, braids, etc.).
- It is suggested to keep each student’s hat and other clothing, and coats on separate hooks or back of the student’s chair.
- The credentialed school nurse can use professional judgment to determine when unusual measures are necessary to respond to extraordinary cases, ie- increase vacuuming in classroom and 10 point cleaning via custodian services
- To prevent re-infestation following treatment, clothing and bedding should be laundered in hot water (140 degrees F for 20 minutes) followed by a hot drying cycle to destroy lice and eggs. Since lice eggs hatch within 6-10 days and lice live only 1-2 days away from the scalp, storing infested items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days is effective for items that cannot be laundered.

Notification Process

- The customary notification for the presence of head lice is to be done on an individual/case-by-case basis to the parent/guardian of an infested student. Classroom notifications are not done with typical head lice cases.
- In the case when a student is excluded, a notice will be given to the parent in person. Phone contact will be attempted and documented. If a letter is used for notification, the credentialed school nurse will provide the letter to use for this notification.
- In some circumstances, it may be appropriate in the professional opinion of the credentialed school nurse and in consultation with the School Administrator to consider a general parent/guardian notification for identified cases of head lice. The credentialed school nurse will provide the letter to use for this notification.

Exclusion Procedures

Note: the presence of severe infestations of untreated head lice can be disruptive to the educational setting.

- In the rare case that a student has either: 1) chronic head lice infestation or 2) severe head lice infestation that is disruptive to the learning environment, the credentialed school nurse will be consulted. **Chronic head lice infestation:** “If a child is found to be repeatedly infested with head lice for six consecutive weeks or in three separate months of the school year” (California Public Health Department, May 2012).
- If in the nurse’s professional judgment it is determined that exclusion needs to be considered, the credentialed school nurse will consult with the school administrator about implementing exclusion of student. This measure will only be taken with careful consideration:
- With chronic head lice infestation cases, the student will be excluded from school and will need to be re-checked after treatment before returning to the classroom.
- The student must pass a head lice re-screening after treatment for re-admission.
- The nurse will secure documentation of repeated and unsuccessful head lice management measures.

- f. The credentialed school nurse is to monitor progress of lice management over a period of time. The goal is supporting the family in eradication of this pest.

Resources

Guidance of Head Lice Prevention and Control of School Districts and Child Care Facilities, California Department of Public Health, Vector-Borne Disease Section (2012).

Center for Disease Control: Head Lice: <http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/schools.html>, May 16, 2007 and September 24, 2013

Clinical Report On Head Lice, Barbara L. Frankowski, MD, MPH, Joseph A. Bocchini, Jr, MD, Council on School Health and Committee on Infectious Disease, PEDIATRICS Vol. 126 No. 2 August 2010.

Exclusion of Children with Head Lice or Nits from Child Care (white Paper) July 22, 2010. Washington State Department of Early Learning,

Frankowski, B.L., Bocchini, J.A. Jr., and the Council of School Health and Committee on Infectious Diseases. Clinical Report Head Lice. 2010. Pediatrics 126: 392 – 403.

Frequently Asked Questions: Head Lice. Identify Us. 2010.

Infectious Disease Control Guide for School Staff; Washington State Department of Health; Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. June 2004.

Informal Parent Survey of Parent Attitudes Around Head Lice Notification, Buter, Leslie A. RN, BSN, & Sutherland, Nancy N. RN, MEd. October, 2010.

Managing Head Lice in the School Setting (PowerPoint). Cole, Marjorie, RN MSN. 2005. National Assembly of School Nurses Listserve.

Schoessler, S.Z. 2004. Treating and managing head lice: the school nurse perspective. American Journal of Managed Care. 10(9 Suppl): S273-6.

