

Head lice are not dangerous and do not spread disease, but cause anxiety and distress amongst parents. They can cause discomfort to the child.

### **The role of families:**

What we expect from you:

- **Check for head lice, ideally using detection combing on wet hair, once a week**
- **If live lice are discovered, treat the infestation as soon as possible**
- **Undertake contact tracing (see details below)**

### **The role of the school:**

What you can expect from us:

- Advise parents on the nature of head lice infestations and the means of controlling them (this leaflet / newsletters). We will no longer send out head lice infestation alerts.
- If staff suspect a child has head lice, we will contact the parent and ask them to assess and/or treat the child ASAP.
- Individual reports will be kept confidential.
- Staff will be vigilant for untreated/persistent cases of head lice infestation and will arrange a meeting with the school nurse for parents of children who persistently have head lice.
- Children will not be excluded because of head lice, except possibly as a last resort, in very exceptional circumstances.

## What are head lice?

A head louse is a tiny, wingless insect that can attach itself to a person's hair, where it feeds on extremely small amounts of blood from the scalp.

They can only move to another head by crawling from hair to hair when the heads physically touch.

Head lice lay eggs around the roots and on the hair – it is the eggs that are more commonly seen in children than the lice.

### **Some head lice facts.....**

- Head lice have nothing to do with cleanliness. Anyone can have lice. Lice love everyone!
- The eggs take 7 to 10 days to hatch.
- "Nits" are the empty egg of a head louse after hatching.
- "Nymphs" are immature head lice, reaching maturity between 7-13 days. Before this they are unable to lay eggs, or move to another head.
- They can live for up to 40 days.
- Lice are programmed to want to move to another head and can move quickly when disturbed – a louse can travel up to 23cm in a minute.
- They cannot jump, swim or fly, only crawl from head to head, so they are not quite the all action heroes we might think.
- After mating, a female louse can store the sperm in a container in her body, so she does not need to mate again to continue producing eggs.
- Head lice only live on human beings, not on other animals.

## How to treat head lice

**We recommend 2 methods of treating head lice:**

### **Head lice treatment lotion:**

Use a medicated lotion or spray that kill head lice in all types of hair. You can buy these from pharmacies, supermarkets or online.

Head lice should die within a day. Lotions and sprays come with a comb to remove dead lice and eggs. Comb thoroughly after treatment, one section of hair at a time.

Some treatments need to be repeated after a week to kill any newly hatched lice. Check the pack to check whether they are suitable for use on your child and how long they should be left in the hair.

### **Wet combing for treatment.**

Using a good quality head lice detection comb, such as the Nitty Gritty comb, comb the whole of the head in sections from the roots to the ends.

This method works better on wet hair, as the head lice find it more difficult to stay on the hair.

Using conditioner and combing before rinsing it out is also very effective.

Repeat every day or two for two weeks.

