

HEAD LICE POLICY

Preamble

This policy outlines the process for responding to reports of head lice efficiently and effectively. It also outlines the process used for the effective monitoring and prevention of head lice at Mount Ridley College.

Rationale

Head lice management is a complex issue for schools, and although head lice do not pose a serious health risk for students, head lice infections can be difficult to manage. Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice; however, schools also have a role in the management of head lice infections and in providing support for parents/guardians and students. Health Regulations (2001) state that government nurses, environmental health officers and medical health officers no longer have authority to examine students for head lice without parental permission.

Guiding Principles

All students and staff at Mount Ridley Prep – 12 College have the right to attend an environment, which is free of head lice, and parents must also be supported in the treatment of head lice. It is also imperative that anxiety relating to head lice is minimised. This occurs by acknowledging that head lice is a common occurrence in most schools and can be managed effectively.

Implementation

At Mount Ridley College, the following procedures are implemented to manage head lice:

1. The College will distribute current information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of each school year and more frequently if required (available from www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice). This information will also provide parents with comprehensive advice about the use of safe treatment practices which do not place children's health at risk.
2. It is an expectation that parents will not send students to school with untreated head lice.
3. Clear protocols will be set in relation to the management of head lice checks within the College.
4. At least one staff member will be trained in the detection of head lice and will oversee the co-ordination of the Head Lice Management Program within the College.
5. On enrolment, parents will be asked to sign a *Notices for Approval* document, which amongst other things, gives consent for student hair to be checked for head lice throughout the year. Only students whose parents have signed this form will have their hair checked.
6. If there is an outbreak in a particular class or year level, these students will have their hair checked as soon as possible.
7. Students will have their hair checked in a private space.
8. If live head lice are found, the student's parents/guardians will be contacted and they will be required to collect the student from school immediately and commence treatment.
9. If eggs are found, the parents/guardians may also be contacted to collect the student, however, the student may remain at school if the parent is unable to collect them. Treatment must occur before the student can return to school.
10. A proforma letter will be sent to the parents/guardians of those students found to have head lice/eggs. This letter includes a detachable return slip asking parents/guardians to indicate which treatment has

been used. This return slip must be provided to the relevant Mini-School Office on the day the student returns to school.

11. The College has a commitment to help reduce stigma and maintain confidentiality following head lice inspections. Therefore, a letter will also be sent home to the families of all students who have had their hair checked requesting that all parents/guardians remain vigilant with their management of head lice.
12. On return to school, all students who required treatment for head lice will be checked again to ensure that the head lice does not require further treatment before the student resumes classes. (EGGS MUST BE COMBED OUT AFTER TREATMENT, NO EGGS MUST BE IN HAIR WHEN STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL)
13. Documentation will be kept of head lice inspections to ensure that the parents of students who are continually found to have head lice are provided with appropriate support in relation to the treatment of head lice.

Supporting Documentation

- Head Lice Guidelines
- Notification of Head Lice Letter
- Head Lice Inspection Letter

Evaluation

As part of the College review cycle this policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date policy ratified:

Date of next review: 2023