



Head lice

LEARNING STORE

Dear Parent

I am writing to all families to pass on some useful information and guidance concerning head lice. There is often much discussion – and a great deal of confusion – concerning how head lice are caught and what should be done to get rid of them.

Head lice have been around for thousands of years and they can affect anyone. They are small crawling insects with short legs and claws. The female lays eggs on the base of hair shafts. The eggs hatch within a week to ten days and the hatched lice are ready to reproduce in a further one to two weeks. Thus, the problem escalates rapidly. The hatched empty eggs are known as nits. Contrary to popular belief, lice do not jump, fly or swim, and they do not live on pets or furniture. They are human parasites and will die if they leave the hair. Head lice feed on blood from the scalp and are very common in children. They affect all social classes and are easily passed from one child to another by close contact. Other family members are often affected.

Itching can take several weeks to occur (if at all) so it is important to check your children regularly with a special detection comb for lice. The only proven effective way to get rid of head lice, if you find them, is a special anti-lice treatment, available over the counter at your pharmacy.

Tips

- Tell the school if your child gets head lice so all the children in the class can be checked. This will prevent them from becoming infected or reinfected.
- Wash your child's hair regularly and inspect for eggs and head lice each time, using a detector comb.
- When using head lice treatments it is essential to follow the instructions carefully and repeat the treatment if necessary.
- It is only necessary to treat the person with head lice and not the whole family, but you should check everyone for head lice.

If you need any further information or advice, please ask your pharmacist.

Yours faithfully

Head teacher