

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The purpose of this letter is to increase awareness of head lice so that you may take steps at home to prevent the spread of lice to your child. Every year in the United States, approximately 12 million children between the ages of 6-12 become infested with head lice. Therefore, any time large numbers of children come together, head lice may be found to exist. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) report that lice are unlikely to be spread in the school setting or by indirect contact with personal items like helmets, hats, headphones, or pillows.

Lice are spread by direct and prolonged head-to-head contact with someone who is infested with live head lice. This contact is most likely to take place outside of the school setting during activities like sleepovers and campouts. Lice do not jump or fly. They are unable to live more than 24 to 48 hours away from the human scalp. Lice are not considered to be a public health problem, because they do not cause or spread disease. Head lice are not required to be reported to or monitored by state departments of public health.

Head lice, however, can be an uncomfortable issue and cause of concern within communities. In effort to prevent the spread of head lice to your child, the following steps can be taken:

- Teach your child to avoid head-to-head contact with others during activities and during sleepovers.
- Check your child's head once a week for signs of head lice.

Mature lice, which are no bigger than the size of a sesame seed, avoid light, are hard to see, and are most often found close to the scalp, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. They are tiny and appear as oval shapes that are "glued" to the hair shaft. They are not easy to remove and cannot be flicked away as easily as dandruff. If you find head lice when checking your child, the following are steps that should be taken:

- Treat your child with lice shampoo according to directions. A second treatment is often required in 7-10 days. You may contact your child's medical provider, pharmacist, or school nurse for information on over-the-counter treatment options.
- Machine wash and dry clothing and bedding used by the child within the previous two days.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture where the child sat or rested in the previous two days. No special cleaning products or procedures are needed.
- Continue to check your child and all household members every 2-3 days for three weeks.

Our school district guidelines outline the actions taken when a student is found to have head lice while in the school setting. These may be found within our Pupil Progression Plan (PPP), which is located on our district website. The Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) and the American Academy of Pediatrics offer additional information regarding the prevention and control of head lice.

Thank you for your help and your support.

Sincerely,

ACS School Nurse