

SUBJECT: PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

Few conditions cause as much concern in schools and homes as pediculosis (head lice). Students in the elementary grades are the most likely target hosts for head lice. These pests do not respect socio-economic class distinctions and their presence does not indicate a lack of hygiene or personal cleanliness.

Recent medical recommendations from both the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) indicate that head lice should not be treated as an illness necessitating absence from school, as studies have shown that the contagion does not spread as easily as once thought. Therefore, the Elmira City School District considers absences due to head lice unnecessary except in cases where a student is found to have live lice in his or her hair. This policy is intended to limit the impact of a head lice infestation on a student's academic progress and self-esteem.

In order to control head lice infestations, the Board of Education has adopted the following protocols:

- a) Head lice screenings, or head checks, will be performed as-needed on students who are symptomatic (observed scratching scalp, complaining of itching, etc.).
- b) If a student is found to have live lice or nits in his or her hair, the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation will be notified immediately. Any student found to have live lice in his or her hair will be sent home from school unless the student's parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached, in which case the student may temporarily return to class. Any student who is found to have nits (but no live lice) in his or her hair will not be sent home from school or excluded from class.
- c) Pesticide usage in District buildings to treat lice, including the use of fumigant sprays or fogs, is ineffective and not necessary per the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Refer to our Pest Management and Pesticide Use Policy #5634 for the proper control and prevention protocol.
- d) A student found to have live lice in his or her hair may return to school once corrective treatment (including the application of an appropriate pediculicide to the hair and scalp and removal of visible nits from the hair) has been administered. Current treatment protocols make this possible in less than twenty-four (24) hours.
- e) A student returning to school following a head lice infestation must first report to the school health office for a head check. The student's parent/person in parental relation must accompany the student. If no live lice are observed during the head check, the student will be allowed to return to class. However, if live lice are observed, the student will be sent home.

(Continued)

POLICY

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Students

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- f) School staff will work with parents/persons in parental relation to minimize student absence resulting from head lice. An infested student is not sick and is not a danger to other students. Excessive and unnecessary absences affect a student's educational progress.
- g) School staff will also work to minimize the social stigma that is unfairly attached to victims of head lice infestations. Head lice are not caused by poverty or unsanitary conditions. Students will not be separated from their peers or singled out as infected. All staff will learn proper precautions to prevent further spread of the infestation.
- h) School staff will protect student privacy and maintain the confidentiality of medical information when infestations are detected.

Regulations will be developed to provide guidelines on the detection and treatment of head lice, as well as classroom procedures for dealing with affected students.

Adopted: 7/9/14; 1/ 20 /16