

Dear Parent or Guardian:

A few cases of head lice have been identified in Lower School. Please read the attached information and check your child closely for signs and symptoms of head lice. Early identification of lice and prompt treatment can successfully prevent the spread of lice to others.

Thank you,  
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MFS School Nurses

### Important Facts About Head Lice

- Don't be embarrassed if your student gets head lice. Between 8 and 12 million children get lice each year. A lice infestation can happen to anyone. Socioeconomic background or lack of cleanliness has nothing to do with determining who gets lice.
- Head lice is not a serious medical condition.
- Lice are insects about the size of a sesame seed. They are an easily treatable condition that can be eliminated once they are discovered.
- You can prevent your student from getting lice. They DO NOT jump or fly. They crawl. Direct physical head to head contact is the usual method of transmission, or by contact with contaminated clothing, combs, brushes, hats, helmets, costumes, earphones, scrunchies or hair ties, goggles, pillows, and stuffed animals. Tell your child not to share combs, hats or other clothing.
- Lice live for about one month. The adult females lay up to 10 eggs (nits) per day. The nits hatch in 7-10 days, and the newborn lice (nymphs) are almost invisible. In about a week, the nymphs have matured and started laying their own eggs.
- If a student does have live lice on his head, the possibility of transmission to others has already been present for at least a month before any symptoms or detection was possible, The average case of head lice is 3-4 months old before it is detected.
- Live lice depend on human blood to survive and cannot live away from the host more than 48 hours.
- Eggs do not survive away from the scalp for more than 7 days.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Itching of skin where lice feed on scalp or neck
- Nits may be glued to hair, commonly behind ears and at nape of neck.
- Scratching, especially behind and around ears and at nape of neck

What Do I Look For?

- The eggs are yellowish white, tan or pearl-grey specks that attach to the hair shaft. They are most often found at the nape of the neck and behind the ears

very CLOSE to the scalp. They do not wash off or blow away. Nits may often be confused with dandruff, hair casts, or dried gel, but these brush off. There may also be red bite marks on the scalp, and occasionally swollen head or neck glands.

If my child has head lice, what do I do?

- Live lice are killed by a specific chemical shampoo that can be bought in the drugstore. You need one application to kill the live lice, but manual removal of the eggs (nits) is also an important step. The National Pediculosis Association recommends the safest and most effective way to remove nits is by using a fine tooth comb. Use the products as directed. Ask the pharmacist or your health care provider for further clarification of package instructions.
- It is VERY IMPORTANT to retreat the infected person in 7-10 days with the chemical shampoo. This will kill the remaining nits.
- Pesticide shampoos are NOT to be used for prevention. Children under the age of two years and people with asthma, allergies, seizures, pregnant and breast feeding women should consult their physician before applying lice pesticides.
- Machine wash all recently used (last 3 days) clothing, towels, coats, hats, and bedding in 140 degree hot water and dry in a hot dryer for 20 minutes.
- Items that cannot be washed (i.e. Goggles, head phones) can be put into a sealed plastic bag for 10 days to destroy the nits.
- Items such as stuffed animals can be dry-cleaned.
- Thoroughly vacuum the environment including furniture. Insect sprays have not been proven useful.
- Check all family for lice or nits. Only use pesticide shampoos if lice/nits are present. DO NOT use for prevention.

\*Information above is from Managing infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools by the American Academy of Pediatrics 2005

When can my student come back to school?

The student may return to school the day after the first shampoo. Please notify your school nurse if your child was treated for head lice. All information is kept confidential.

For More Information:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidid/dpd/parasites/headlice/factsht\\_head\\_lice\\_treating.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidid/dpd/parasites/headlice/factsht_head_lice_treating.html)

Utah Department of Health

[http://health.utah.gov/epi/fact\\_sheets/lice.html](http://health.utah.gov/epi/fact_sheets/lice.html)

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;110/3/638>

Harvard School Of Public Health

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>