



# Littlehampton Primary School & Preschool

## Head lice at school

It is parents' responsibility to keep their children free from head lice. At school we take measures to inform families when outbreaks occur, to help detect head lice, and to support families in understanding what to do if their children do get head lice, so that they are successfully 'nit free' and can return to school as soon as possible. Note that the term **head lice** refers to the small ant-sized brown adult insects and the term **nits** refers to tiny white head lice eggs.

### Parents:

- Perform regular weekly checks of your children's heads for head lice, as recommended by SA Health. If you detect head lice, inform the school (and OSHC if they attend) so that we can alert other parents.
- If informed that there is a current outbreak of head lice at school, check daily for at least the next three weeks. If your child says they have an itchy head, or you observe them scratching their head, there is a good chance that head lice are present, even if you can't see them easily.
- If contacted by the school because we suspect your child has head lice, collect your child and check carefully to confirm whether lice are present by a visual check in strong light, and if still unsure, by 'wet combing'. Wet combing means applying conditioner to dry hair and pulling through a metal lice comb to see if there are eggs or lice left on the comb. *See brochure Head lice – Prevention and treatment (SA Health) for wet combing instructions.*
- If lice are detected, follow treatment advice carefully, and treat again 7-10 days after the original treatment, to kill any head lice that may have hatched from nits that survived the first treatment.
- Ensure your children do not attend school with untreated head lice.

### Teachers:

- Observe children; be alert for children with itchy heads, especially behind ears and back of the head.
- If you observe head lice, or suspect a child has nits, talk privately with them about it. Reassure the child that they are not in trouble, but that you think they may have nits. Let them know that everyone can get nits; that it is not their fault, but that they may need to be treated before coming back to class, since nits are very easy to pass on to other children without meaning to. Send them to the front office.
- During an outbreak of head lice, implement learning activities that minimize head to head contact, and avoid sharing of hats.
- Inform leadership if frequent outbreaks are not contained, or if some families are having difficulty eradicating nits, so that we can support with more detailed advice and can follow up if necessary.

### Front office staff:

- Inform families of their responsibilities re head lice, through twice yearly newsletter articles, and sending home the brochure *Head lice – Prevention and treatment (SA Health)* once a year.
- If teachers send students to the front office with suspected head lice, contact families to come and collect their children. Parents will need to take their children home, check for head lice, and then treat. Note that head lice cannot always be easily seen, and they may need to do a more thorough check at home, by wet combing, to confirm the presence of head lice or nits.
- Support families of children with head lice by providing them with an information booklet about the best way to treat the head lice to avoid re-infestation. Order booklets from SA Health Protection Programs 8226 7100 or [healthprotectionprograms@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:healthprotectionprograms@health.sa.gov.au).
- Inform parents that children cannot return to school before being treated.
- Send an information note home to families in classes where head lice have been detected, and to parents of children in OSHC, if they attend. Inform leadership that this note has gone home, so that we can monitor across the school.

If we work together to follow these measure, we hope to keep outbreaks of head lice to an absolute minimum. We thank staff and families for their help.