

Dear Parent/Carer,

Headlice infestation is a common problem with young children.

The Primary Healthcare Trust tell us that....

- Head louse infection is not primarily a problem of schools but of the wider community. It cannot be solved by the school, but the school can help the local community to deal with it.
- Transmission of lice within the classroom is relatively rare. When it does occur, it is usually from a 'best friend'.
- At any one time, most schools will have a few children who have active infestation of head lice. This is often between 0% and 5%, rarely more. The perception by parents and staff, however, is often that there is a serious "outbreak" with many children infected. This is hardly ever the case'.
- Examinations for head lice are no longer carried out by school nurses as it was never effective - checking for head lice infection is a parental responsibility. Headteachers are advised by the PCT that they 'should not agree with angry parents that routine head inspections should be re-introduced. They were never effective'.

So what does the school do about headlice?

- Education on headlice is the key to appropriate control of head louse infestations. We make sure parents/carers have clear information by arranging regular workshops and presentations regarding dealing with headlice.
- We have a School Nurse available on site each week to provide help and advice to parents/carers.
- Staff are asked to discreetly inform parents/carers if they notice that a child has an infestation of headlice.

- Where we identify children who are regularly infested with no apparent treatment or regular hair care taking place the headteacher will arrange for those parents to have specific help and advice.
- We inform parents that there is not a lot of point in spending money on shampoos and lotions, most of which are largely or completely ineffective.
- Our policy is generally not to send out 'headlice alert' notices because we would like all parents/carers to be continually checking their child's hair, not just responding when we send out an alert message.

Top tips for detecting and controlling headlice infestation.

- Top tip and most important, check your child's hair (and the rest of your family) regularly.
- Use a detection method proven to be effective ('wet combing' at least once a week - see the next section).
- Don't use lotions or shampoos unless you find a living louse. The 'just in case method' can harm your child's scalp and cause lice to become immune to lotions.
- Seek advice from our School Nurse, your Health Visitor or GP for current recommended methods of eradication as these change from time to time.
- If you detect headlice it is important to try and eradicate them quickly as they breed and lay eggs, which will hatch between 10-15 days later.
- An adult head louse can live up to 2 days in a hairbrush so it is important to avoid sharing brushes and combs.
- Tell people your child has close contact with even if you find this difficult - it will prompt them to check their child's hair too and help prevent re-infestation.

What is `wet combing`?

- Wet combing is a method for detecting and eradicating headlice. It can be used on all members of the family including babies and is 4 TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE than using a lotion or shampoo.
- It is simple and inexpensive, buying a comb costs about 60p but make sure you get a fine bug-busting comb (some of them are not fine enough to comb out all the lice and eggs).
- WASH hair, RINSE and then ADD CONDITIONER.
- Comb the hair with a normal wide toothed comb to get rid of knots and tangles.
- COMB with the DETECTION COMB, start at the roots close to the scalp. Comb down the hair shafts then look for signs of louse in the teeth of the comb. They will look like small speckles of pale brown flakes.



- Rinse the comb under running water and repeat the combing process until all the conditioner has been combed out.
- Rinse hair with clean water and repeat weekly (more often if you've found headlice).
- Make it part of the regular bath time routine.

Educate your children about hair care and headlice - there are lots of great activities for kids to learn about headlice on www.headlice.org/kids Adults can also go to www.wellchild.org.uk

LAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL



PARENTAL INFORMATION



HEADLICE INFESTATION