

HEAD LICE POLICY

Associated Policies: Asthma Management
HIV/Hepatitis
Hygiene Practices for Children
Immunisation
Anaphylaxis Management

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Revised:

Legislation: Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009

Location/Ownership: POLICY MANUAL - CENTRE OPERATIONS
Emergency procedures folder

POLICY STATEMENT:

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, educators and children. This policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the centre's community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the main responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our centre's community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

This policy draws on information from the *Scratching for Answers?* information pamphlet and management guidelines and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009*, 'Staying Healthy Prevention infectious diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services' and must be implemented in conjunction with the centre's Children's Health Policy.

** Please note: All references to head lice in this policy refers to both eggs and live insects.*

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Philosophy - Children to develop to their full potential in a safe, caring environment.
- Children's needs - Protection from infection, clean hygienic environment, instruction about personal hygiene, appropriate clothing, developmental opportunities.
- Parents needs - Parents/guardians must ensure that they have provided the emergency contact details of someone who is able to collect their child if they are unable to do so. The emergency contact will be used in cases where the parent/guardian is unavailable to be notified or unable to collect the child. This information must be kept current by the parent/guardian.
- Staff needs - Protection from infection, clean hygienic environment, appropriate equipment to ensure high level of hygiene, clear guidelines in relation to their duty of care.
- Management needs - Staff to maintain appropriate levels of hygiene and cleanliness to meet required standards; parents to co-operate in keeping sick and infectious children away from the Centre.

PROCEDURE:

It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this centre that you will:

- Regularly inspect your children's and all household members hair for head lice weekly, at home, and use the recommended conditioner/combing detection method when head lice are suspected and then treat them if necessary.
- Not allow your child to attend the centre with untreated head lice (in accordance with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009).
- Keep your child at home if head lice are present.
- Staff are required to notify parents/carers as soon head lice are identified.
- Collect your child as soon as possible if head lice are identified and you have been notified. Your child can return to care once effective treatment of the head lice has commenced.
- It is a recommendation of the Department of Health that if your child has long hair, you tie it back if this is at all possible.
- Treat head lice safely and as recommended.
- Notify the parents/carers of your child's friends so they can check their children and treat if necessary.
- Maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the centre and broader community around issues of head lice.

To support parents/carers and the broader centre community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the centre will:

- Distribute up to date and accurate information on the finding, treating and controlling head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the centre.
- Include information and updates in the centre's newsletters.
- Include annual head egg/lice updates for staff in-service programs.
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- Access community educational resources and support, such as community health centres and local government.
- Follow the recommendations of the *School Exclusion Policy of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009* in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the centre rests with the director or staff member in charge.
- Only exclude children from the centre with untreated head lice.
- Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- Encourage children to learn about head lice to help reduce stigma or bullying.
- Be aware of real difficulties some parents may have and seek extra support if required.
- Participate in a Head Lice Local Area Network to work with schools, other childcare centres, health services and pharmacists in your Local Government Area to achieve consistent management and policy.
- Review the head lice policy annually and seek endorsement from the Committee of Management/centre community.

- Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with the staff of the centre, families and broader centre community around issues of head lice.
- Seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

There is no requirement for any centre to undertake head-lice inspection programs unless the Committee of Management and centre community choose to implement an inspection program.

The Department of Health recommends that a child is treated every two to three days when head lice are a recurring problem.

REFERENCE:

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority): www.acecqa.gov.au
- <http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Minimum-Period-of-Exclusion-from-Primary-Schools-and-Childrens-Services-Centres-for-Infectious-Diseases-Cases-and-Contacts>
- *'Staying Healthy Prevention infectious diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services'*