



# HEAD LICE POLICY

## Rationale

St Patrick's Primary School shows concern for the health of all school members and in relation to Head Lice treats every member equally. It is recognised that Head Lice are an ongoing problem in schools due, in the main, to the closeness of children being together. St Patrick's makes every effort to minimise this problem through parental notification and current information. At all times, privacy laws are adhered to and individuals suspected of having Head Lice infestation are treated with sensitivity and discreetly, always respecting the individual's human dignity.

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are a cause of head itch and scratching, which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be controlled.

## Aims

- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

## Implementation

- Anyone can catch head lice. Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and may also be spread by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.
- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will alert parents of lice when detected.
- Consistent with NSW Health advice, the Principal/and or delegate will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that day through a letter which will be sent home with all children in that class. (See Attachment 1)
- The Principal will ensure that information relating to head lice appears in the school newsletter, Parent Information Book and Head Lice Policy on the school's corporate website.

## Responsibilities

Principal will:

- Inform the class of outbreaks by letter and through the newsletter. (Attachment 1)
- Manage a process for head lice outbreaks, guided by the procedures stated in this policy.

Teachers will:

- Be alert to possible outbreaks in their classrooms.
- Inform Principal/Assistant Principal if a child is suspected of having live head lice and arrange for the parent/guardian to be informed by letter.
- Be mindful to maintain the privacy and dignity of the child and family at all times.
- Encourage students to avoid head to head contact in group activities as far as possible, especially in the younger classes.

Parents:

As infestations are particularly common in primary schools, it is best to choose a treatment that can be used over time. There is no single solution to eradication, only persistence.

- regularly check your children's hair
- teach older children to check their own hair
- tie back and braid long hair
- keep a fine tooth head lice comb in the bathroom and encourage all family members to use it when they wash their hair.
- support the school in its effort to manage outbreaks of head lice.

Children will:

- Keep long hair tied back.
- Not borrow or swap hats.

## Procedures

When a member of staff suspects a child is infested with head lice, the following procedures should be followed:

- A letter must be sent home within a day notifying parents of their child or other students in the class that infestation is suspected and asking them to check all their children for head lice. No child is to be named or singled out as having head lice.
- The Principal may also provide parents with a copy of information sheet on head lice infestation and treatment.
- If a student is not treated for head lice and appears to remain infected; the above procedures should be repeated.
- If head lice stills remains untreated after repeated efforts by the school to inform parents by letter, the Principal or delegate will telephone the parents to inform them that their child is suspected of having head lice.

## Reflective Materials

- NSW Health Information, 2013
- <http://www.schooltoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/health/removing-head-lice-and-nits>
- <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice/Pages/treatment.aspx>

This policy was last ratified by St. Patrick's School Board in... revised in...	November 2008 April 2013
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ATTACHMENT 1



# ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL

PO Box 89 (78 Wallace Street)  
Macksville NSW 2447  
www.macvplism.catholic.edu.au  
ABN 85 520 375 299

Phone: 02 65681397  
Fax: 02 65681721  
Email: sppmacks@lism.catholic.edu.au

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer

I am writing to advise you that we suspect nits/head lice are present in the hair of some students within \_\_\_\_\_ class.

Please check your child's hair for nits/lice tonight using the methods recommended in information from NSW Health. If you find any eggs or lice please commence treatment as recommended. **It is suggested that you check all siblings hair for nits/lice.**

<http://www.schooltoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/health/removing-head-lice-and-nits>

NSW Health advises to retreat the hair after seven days to ensure that any immature head lice that have hatched since the initial treatment are removed before they can lay more eggs.

Further information on head lice is available on the NSW Health website (details above) or through the Department's website at

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice/Pages/treatment.aspx>

I appreciate your assistance in this regard.

Yours Sincerely,

Vin Butler  
PRINCIPAL