

# COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

## HEADLICE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Anyone can get head lice and given the chance head lice move from head to head without discrimination.

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the control and management of head lice infections is a shared responsibility amongst a number of agencies including schools.

Head lice have been around for many thousands of years.

### 2. The School's Management Plan

#### Parent / Carer Responsibilities

Parental and carer responsibilities include:

- ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice;
- the use of safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk. Unsafe practices include: treating hair with a product that contains an insecticide more often than once per week or using it as a preventative measure; using pet flea or tick treatments, fly spray or insecticidal surface sprays and dangerous products such as kerosene.

To achieve this, it is reasonable to expect parents and carers will:

- regularly (preferably once a week) inspect their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the easiest and most effective way to do this – see DHS pamphlet);
- regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary;
- notify the school if their child is affected, and advise the school in writing when the treatment was started and what product / method was used;
- notify the parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

Exclusion under the Health (Infectious Disease) Regulations 2001 refers to exclusion of children from school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. In the case of head lice, appropriate treatment refers to treatment which removes live lice. For instance, the use of combing and conditioner can constitute appropriate treatment. If a child re-attends school with live lice they can again be excluded until the live insects have been removed.

#### School Responsibilities

The school will be responsible for:

- the distribution of policies and information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required.

The school will provide support to parents through:

- practical advice and a sympathetic attitude so as to avoid stigmatising families who are experiencing difficulty with the control measures;
- encouraging parents to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child/ren for head lice. Older children could be taught to use conditioner

to check their own hair (see the resources section of [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/headlice](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/headlice));

- being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from a school rests with the principal or person in charge of the school;
- being aware that the exclusion of children from a school refers only to those children who have live insects and does not refer to head lice eggs;
- educating all the staff at the school about head lice;
- encouraging children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue (see the resources section of [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/headlice](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/headlice));
- notifying parents that they are not to send their children to school with untreated head lice. **They are not to return to school until the 'Notification of Treatment' form has been signed and returned.**

### 3. Head Lice Support/Resource Person

The principal shall be the point of contact for parents regarding head lice advice and reporting.

### 4. School Support

5. The school will provide nit combs to families on a loan basis to encourage regular inspection.

### 6. Protocol For School Inspection Program

- Inspections of students' hair will be undertaken by approved volunteer parents at least once per term. Follow up or additional inspections to be organised at the principal's discretion.
- Each family will receive an inspection consent form to complete and return to the school, which is valid for the period of their child/ren's enrolment at Comet Hill Primary School.
- A proforma notification letter will be sent to all parents, providing results of inspections. This proforma will include a detachable slip for parents to notify the school that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- All forms, guidelines and information are included in Appendix 1 of this policy.

**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**PARENT NOTIFICATION**

\*\* If every child receives a letter, then confidentiality is maintained for all students, regardless of screening results.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Today your child was screened for headlice infestation and was found to have the following:

- Live lice
- Dead lice
- Louse eggs
- No evidence of lice or eggs found

Under the Health (Infections Diseases) Regulations 2001 children can be excluded from school if found to have live lice or eggs.

Please treat your child appropriately by following the attached information sheet on 'Treating and Controlling Head Lice'.

Return the slip below informing the principal when treatment has occurred, thus allowing your child to return to school.

Head Lice lotion is available from the school.  
If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

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**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**NOTIFICATION OF TREATMENT**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

My child was screened on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/200\_\_ by the Comet Hill Primary School Head Lice Program and was found to have live lice and/or eggs.

I have treated my child with \_\_\_\_\_(please give product name) and thus is eligible to return to school.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/200\_\_  
Parents Name (Please Print)      Parent Signature      Date

**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**CONSENT FORM**

For the many families and teachers of school-aged children, head lice continue to create concerns. While it is known that head lice do not carry infectious disease, the principal, teaching staff and school council at Comet Hill Primary School have developed a head lice inspection program to help parents manage head lice.

Program goals include:

- Reduce the frustration and misinformation associated with head lice.
- Decrease the concerns regarding head lice within the school community.
- Protect families from misusing potentially harmful insecticide treatments.
- Promoting regular home based screening using a conditioner and comb method.

The screening program will take place at least once per term by a qualified registered nurse. Every family will receive written notification of the results of inspections.

Please complete the permission slip below and return to the school.

Regular updates about our program will appear in the school newsletter. For further details and information please feel free to contact the school.

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**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**CONSENT FORM**

I give permission for my child/ren to participate in the Head Lice Inspection Program at Comet Hill Primary School.

Child:	Grade:
Child:	Grade:
Child:	Grade:
Child:	Grade:
Parent / Guardian Signature:	Date:

**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**CHILD SCREENING GUIDELINES**  
**Conditioner Method**

\*\* Conditioner stuns head lice! The stunning effect lasts approximately 20 minutes, after which they become active again. Conditioner also makes it hard for lice to grip the hair shafts, thus increasing the likelihood of dislodging them during fine combing.

**EQUIPMENT**

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Conditioner – white conditioner is best since the lice and eggs are easier to see

A fine tooth (lice) comb – to remove lice and eggs

A normal comb – to remove tangles

Tissues – white tissues are best since the lice and eggs are easier to see

Towel or disposable bluey – placed around child's shoulders to protect clothing

**PROCEDURE**

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1. Ensure child has returned the signed consent form.
2. Introduce yourself to the child and explain the procedure simply.
3. Ensure adequate lighting. Natural light is best.
4. Place the towel/bluey around the child's shoulders.
5. Detangle the hair (older children can do this themselves to save time).
6. Apply conditioner to dry hair aiming to cover each hair from root to tip with a layer of conditioner.
7. Detangle the hair using an ordinary comb.
8. Immediately comb the hair with a fine tooth (lice) comb.
9. Wipe the conditioner off the fine toothcomb onto a paper tissue and look for lice and eggs.
10. Repeat the process for every part of the head at least five times.
11. Most of the conditioner is combed out, thus there is no need to rinse the child's hair. Tie long hair back.
12. Follow 'Infection Control Guidelines' for cleaning of equipment.
13. Ensure the appropriate confidential notification procedure occurs as per school policy.

**OUTCOME**

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Each child will be assessed for head lice in an accurate and confidential manner, and parents/guardians of those infected are notified as per school policy.

**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**CHILD SCREENING GUIDELINES**

**Dry Checking**

\*\* Head lice move very quickly when disturbed, and are therefore often difficult to locate when checking. Whilst 'dry checking' is not as effective as the 'conditioner method', it is however more practical when screening large numbers of children. It is therefore important to remember that the results from this method of checking will not be as accurate.

**PROCEDURE**

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1. Ensure child has returned the signed consent form.
2. Ensure adequate lighting. Natural light is best.
3. Introduce yourself to the child and explain the procedure simply.
4. Randomly check areas of the scalp. Check the full length of the hair.
5. Work your way towards the scalp. Louse eggs are usually laid 1.5cm from the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair. Often looks like dandruff, but cannot be brushed off. Pay particular attention to areas of warmth (eg. behind ears).
6. Ensure the appropriate confidential notification procedure occurs as per school policy.

**OUTCOME**

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Each child will be assessed for head lice in an effective and confidential manner, and parents, guardians of those infected are notified as per school policy.

**COMET HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**HEAD LICE PROGRAM**

**INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES**

EQUIPMENT

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- Alcohol-based solution – to disinfect hands between children (eg. Hibiclens).
- Hot soapy water (>60C) – to disinfect combs.

PROCEDURE

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1. Ensure that the person conducting inspections has jewellery removed and nails are short to prevent injury to the child. Ensure any open wounds/abrasions are covered.
2. Hair should be tied back.
3. Hands do not need to be washed in between children, except when head lice have been identified.
4. All lice combs used during the ‘conditioner method’ should be soaked in hot soapy water after use. (Lice die in 60C hot water after 30 seconds.)
5. Lice combs will also need to be scrubbed with an old hard toothbrush and perhaps a pin, tooth pick or dental floss to remove eggs caught in the base of the comb.

OUTCOME

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Head lice screening procedures will be conducted with no cross contamination occurring between children.