

September 2014

Dear Parents,

This communication will serve to inform parents of the practices in place to reduce the incidents of head lice that occur in our schools. Head lice are often a fact of life for school-aged children. While inconvenient, head lice cause no medical harm and can be effectively treated.

Our policy (#5141.221) was adopted by the Suffield Board of Education in 2012. It aligns with a clinical report from the American Academy of Pediatric Medicine that recommended the elimination of universal large scale screenings of students and notifying parent of each and every case where lice or nits (the eggs of lice) were detected. Instead, the practice of having teachers monitoring all students for symptom related to lice infestation such as scratching of the scalp. Where symptoms are detected the student is screened individually by the nurse and the nurse works with the parent directly to insure that appropriate treatment is accomplished.

Our regulations were enhanced last spring to insure that the district communicate with parents quarterly by providing information on how to monitor signs and symptoms. Another change is to allow the school nurse and principal to work with the Superintendent to determine if a more targeted notification is necessary when a significant number of cases are detected in a particular classroom.

For more information relative to the treatment and prevention of head lice, I encourage you to visit the Center for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov. If you would like hard copy materials, please feel free to contact me directly.

Our staff is aware of the need to watch for signs and symptoms of head lice, such as frequent head scratching. Parents can help by watching for those same signs and by screening carefully at home whenever those symptoms are present. When those symptoms are observed in school, students are referred to the nurse for private screening. The nurse will contact parents to insure appropriate treatment is implemented.

Preventing further transmission when a case is identified requires the cooperation and active response of all teacher, parents and students. That active response includes becoming informed, immediate communication with the school nurse when a student is diagnosed with an active case (even if the child has already been treated), and respect for the privacy of those who may have become infested.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have further questions, please contact your school.

Sincerely,

Jim Collin, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent