



Richmond Primary School

HEAD LICE POLICY

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

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

This policy draws on information obtained from *Head Lice: Scratching for Answers?*¹ - the Victorian government's head lice website containing management guidelines

ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers of children attending Richmond Primary School are expected to:

- check the children's hair for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended combing with conditioner detection method
- ensure children do not attend school with untreated head lice, in accordance with Victoria's Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001
- regularly inspect all household members and then treat them if necessary
- notify the school if they find lice that are alive in the children's hair and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced, in accordance with Victoria's Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001
- ensure children with long hair attend school with their hair tied back
- use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice
- notify the parents and carers of their children's friends when their own children are found with head lice, so those families have an early opportunity to detect head lice and, if necessary, treat their children
- maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising and blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community, particularly around issues of head lice
- make sure that, after being notified that their children have been screened for head lice and found to have live lice and/or eggs, they complete the *Notification of Treatment* form and return it to the school office or notify the school that treatment has commenced

¹ www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

To support parents, carers and the broader school community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management, the school is expected to:

- distribute up-to-date and accurate 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
- include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families and staff attending the school
- include information and updates in school newsletters
- provide practical advice, maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising and blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures
- access community educational resources and support, such as primary school nurses, community health centres and local government
- abide by the recommendations of the School Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the school rests with the principal or person in charge and
- only exclude children from school who are found with live head lice

[Note: While head lice are not considered an agent for infectious disease, they are included on the school exclusion table. The exclusion criteria for head lice should be interpreted as:

At the conclusion of the school day, provide children with a note to take home to inform their parents or carers that they have head lice. Children may return to school after treatment has commenced.]

- accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced
- encourage children to learn about head lice, so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue
- request that all families attending Richmond Primary School sign an agreement in which they accept the conditions of the school's head lice policy
- be aware of the real difficulties some parents and carers may encounter and seek extra support if required
- review the head lice policy regularly and seek endorsement from the School Council and community
- act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community, especially around issues of head lice
- continue to seek opportunities to increase the school community's collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.
- offer a parent-managed head lice programme (providing enough volunteers are available) and
- include teachers and school staff in inspection.

ROLE OF THE PARENT-MANAGED HEAD LICE PROGRAMME

- Any person employed by the school, or volunteering, to undertake head lice inspections will adhere to the school policy, to the latest Department of Human Services information and to the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001.
- Any person employed by the school, or volunteering, to undertake head lice inspections will sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Any person employed by the school, or volunteering, to undertake head lice inspections will obtain a Working with Children Check prior to commencing screening duties.
- Such people will only inspect the heads of children whose parents have given prior consent.
- The school will develop a consent form for parents and guardians to sign at the commencement of children's schooling. This form will be kept on file for the duration of the children's time at Richmond Primary School.
- The programme will respect the wishes of parents and carers who elect not to participate in a school head lice check.
- To help reduce stigma and to maintain confidentiality when conducting head lice inspections, a letter should be given to all the children involved after their hair has been inspected.
- The programme will only use the dry checking method to screen students' hair (see attachment A).
- The programme will adhere to infection control guidelines (see attachment B).
- People engaged in undertaking head lice inspections will complete the *Screening Results* spreadsheet and submit it to the Principal.
- People engaged in undertaking head lice inspections will prepare the *Parent and Carer Notification* form for each student participating in the screening programme and give the forms to those children's teachers on the day of screening.
- The programme will not be responsible for any incorrect screening reports that are sent home to students.

EVALUATION

- Feedback will be sought from the school community.
- Regular review of this policy and procedure, in line with current Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Human Services guidelines, will be carried out.

Ratified by School Council: May 2009

ATTACHMENT A

Parent-managed head lice programme

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 combing with conditioner method it is, however, more practical when screening large numbers of children. It is therefore important to remember that the results from dry checking will not be as accurate as the conditioner method.

PROCEDURE

1. Ensure the 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 child's 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. They often look like dandruff, but cannot be brushed off. Pay particular attention to areas of warmth (e.g. behind the ears).
6. Ensure the appropriate confidential notification procedure occurs as per school policy.

OUTCOME

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

ATTACHMENT B

Parent-managed head lice programme

INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES

EQUIPMENT

Alcohol based solution – to disinfect hands between checking of children (e.g. Hibiclens)

PROCEDURE

1. Ensure that the volunteer parents remove their jewellery and their nails are short, to prevent injury to the children. Ensure any open wounds or abrasions they have are covered.
2. Volunteers' hair should be tied back.
3. Volunteers' hands do not need to be washed between each check of children, except when head lice have been identified.

ATTACHMENT C

RICHMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL Parent-Managed Head Lice Programme

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

As a volunteer parent head lice inspector at Richmond Primary School, I acknowledge that, in the course of my work, I will be privileged to personal and confidential information about children and their families.

I agree to not discuss such personal and confidential matters with any persons, except where it is necessary that I inform the Principal.

I understand that breach of confidentiality would result in my dismissal from the programme.

I also agree to obtain a Working with Children Check prior to commencing any screening duties and to organise for the school office to keep a copy on file.

Volunteer Parent's Name (Please Print)

Volunteer Parent's Signature

Date: ___/___/20

Principal's Signature

Date: ___/___/20

ATTACHMENT E

RICHMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL Parent-Managed Head Lice Programme

PARENT AND CARER NOTIFICATION

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

Today your child was screened by the volunteer parents of the Richmond Primary School parent-managed head lice programme and was found to have the following:

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

Under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, children found with live lice cannot be readmitted to school until appropriate treatment for lice has commenced.

Please treat your child appropriately by following the attached information sheet on management and treatment of head lice.

Please return the slip below, informing me that treatment has occurred, when your child returns to school.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Thank you for taking part in this community approach to head lice control.

Megan Smith
Principal

RICHMOND PRIMARY SCHOOL Parent-Managed Head Lice Programme

NOTIFICATION OF TREATMENT

Child's name: _____ Grade: _____

My child was screened on ___/___/___ by the parent-managed head lice programme and was found to have live lice and/or eggs.

I have treated my child with _____
and my child will be returning to school today.

Parent's name (Please print)

Parent's signature

___/___/___
Date

