

Dear Parents,

I need to bring to your attention the fact that we have an ongoing problem with head lice in the school. There are a number of parents who have come to me to express their exasperation as they regularly check their child's hair for lice and find them, treat their child, only to find that they have them again just a couple of weeks later. This says to me that there are some parents who are not in the habit of vigilantly checking their child's hair and these children are re-infecting all the other children.

We will need to send children home if their nits are not treated as it is unfair on other families who are being reinfested.

One thing that will be exacerbating this problem is the number of children with long hair that are wearing their hair down. Hair should always be tied up with school coloured hair bands and I always have lots of spare ones in my office if you are ever caught short!

Please see the important guidance below and over the page to help us solve this problem...

How to spot head lice:

- **Check your child's hair. The most common places for head lice to lurk are in the hair behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.**
- **If you still can't spot any lice, comb the child's hair with a special 'nit comb'. These are available from most chemists. It's easier to spot head lice as they fall out if you comb the hair over a piece of white paper.**



You can obviously buy medicated treatments that have varied success in eradicating the Lice and they do not always kill the eggs. Many people really rate the wet comb method (see over the page for details).

Wet-combing method

The wet-combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb with a spacing of less than 0.3mm. Your pharmacist can advise you on which combs are suitable.

No medicated products are necessary for wet combing. This can be beneficial because head lice are becoming more resistant to the insecticides that are commonly used to remove them.

However, the success of the wet-combing method depends on adopting a painstaking approach that involves regular and thorough combing.

The wet-combing method is described below.

- Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply ample conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure that the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair section by section so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.
- Repeat the procedure on day five, nine and 13 in order to clear the young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity.

The time that it will take to comb your child's hair will depend on the type of hair that they have and its length. For example, short, straight hair can be quickly prepared and can be fine-toothed combed in a few minutes, whereas longer, curlier hair will take longer to comb.

Let's work together to make these creatures feel truly unwelcome in our school!

With best wishes,

Avis Hawkins

