

HEAD LICE / PEDICULOSIS

Category: R

This policy is adopted to carry out the provisions of RSA 200:32, RSA 200:38, and RSA 200:39.

Pediculosis: Screening. Based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Board recognizes that school-wide screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children will become infested with head lice, and screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant decrease on the incidence of head lice in a school community.

The school nurse will periodically provide information to families of all children on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of head lice. Parents are encouraged to check their children's heads for lice if the child is symptomatic.

Management on the Day of Diagnosis. The Board recognizes that head lice infestation poses little risk to others and does not result in additional health problems. The management of pediculosis should proceed so as to not disrupt the education process. Nonetheless, any staff member who suspects a student has head lice will report this to the school nurse or Principal. Students known to have head lice will remain in class provided the student is comfortable. If a student is not comfortable, he/she may report to the school nurse or principal's office. Such students will be discouraged from close direct head contact with others and from sharing personal items with other students.

To avoid embarrassment and to contain the infestation, whole classrooms will be checked for head lice upon the report of possible infestation by a classroom teacher. The administrator, his/her designee, school nurse or another qualified professional will examine the child in question and the child's classmates. Siblings of students found with lice and their classmates will also be checked if there is suspicion that infestation may exist. Based upon the school nurse's recommendation, other children who were most likely to have had direct head-to-head contact with the assessed child may be checked or screened for head lice.

The Principal or school nurse will notify the parent/guardian by telephone or other available means if their child is found to have head lice. Verbal and written instructions for treatment will be given to the family of each identified student. Instructions will include recommendations for treatment that are consistent with New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services recommendations.

Criteria for Return to School. Once a student with "live lice" has left the school, he/she will not be allowed until after treatment with an anti-parasitic drug or other proper treatment as recommended by the school nurse has begun. The Board recognizes that The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses discourage "no nit" policies. In alignment with these recommendations, no student will be excluded from attendance solely based on grounds that nits may be present. The school nurse may recheck a child's head for live infestation. In addition, the school nurse may offer extra help or information to families of children who are repeatedly or chronically infested.

Legal References:

RSA 189:15, Regulations

RSA 200:32, Physical Examination of Pupils

RSA 200:38, Control and Prevention of Communicable Diseases: Duties of School Nurse

RSA 200:39, Exclusion from School

American Academy of Pediatrics, Clinical Report on Head Lice Infestation, September 2002 - <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;110/3/638>

Colebrook School Board: Adopted – April 21, 2020

Pittsburg School Board: Adopted – May 11, 2020

Stewartstown School Board: Adopted – May 4, 2020