



Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and
Newcastle

St Mary's RC Primary School: Head Lice Policy



Excellence, inspired by Gospel values

Headteacher: Mr David Miller

Chair of Governors: Mrs Michelle Harris

Date: November 2017

Date for Review: November 2020

Head Lice Policy

St Mary's RC Primary School is aware of the national problem of head Lice and how it can sometimes affect children of a primary school age at home and in school.

This policy sets out the duties and responsibilities of parents, the school and the Health Authorities in dealing with head lice as well as providing some practical advice as to how to tackle head lice.

Parents'/Carers'/Guardians' Duties

- Undertake regular weekly, and where appropriate daily, checks to ensure that your child/family is not affected. This should be done with a detector comb as noted in the advice section. All family members should be checked.
- Inform all contacts of the family/ friends who may have come in to head-to-head contact for a minute or more in the last month.
- Seek advice from a medical practitioner (Pharmacist/ Health Visitor/ Doctor about using an approved lotion and treat using this method in the recommended way.)

School will undertake to

- Provide information about Head Lice on an annual basis and more regularly if many cases arise.
- Encourage parents to seek advice from the School Health if they find Head Lice to be a problem.
- Maintain a visual check on pupils.
- Alert parents (class/year group) via a text/ letter/email if an outbreak is noted.
- Alert individual parents by letter/ phone call if a more persistent case is noted.
- Invite these parents to meet with the Parent Support Officer to discuss treatment/ provide advice.
- The Parent Support Officer (with the parent's permission) will then refer that parent/child to the School Nurse/ Health Visitor enabling that parent to gain support.
- Offer to provide assistance with wet combing and /or other treatment.

Advice Section

Facts about head lice

- Head Lice are small, six-legged wingless insects that live on the hair close to the scalp where it is warm and easy for them to feed.
- They are pin-head size when they hatch, less than match-head size when fully grown and are difficult to see in the hair.
- The eggs are glued individually to hairs near the scalp. Unhatched eggs are dull in colour and hard to see, but after the lice have hatched the empty egg sacs - called 'nits' - are white and easy to see. Many people mistake the empty egg sacs or 'nits' for Head Lice when they are actually evidence of a previous infection of head lice.
- Head Lice are easily missed in dry hair and do not necessarily cause itching.
- There are often only 10 lice or less on a head.

- Head Lice can't fly, jump or swim. They spread from person to person by climbing swiftly along hairs during close head to head contact.
- Head Lice are not fussy about hair length or condition - clean hair is no protection.
- Head Lice infection is common. Anyone with hair can get them, but children, who put their heads together a lot, tend to get them more often.

Detection

Head Lice can't be prevented but regular checking ensures early detection and treatment if necessary. The best detection method is wet combing.

Parents and carers should aim to check their children's hair once a week during hair washing. You need your usual shampoo, ordinary conditioner and a louse detection comb. Remember that you are looking for living moving Head Lice - the only evidence that your child has a head lice infection. The comb must be fine enough to catch the lice. Your pharmacist should be able to recommend a suitable one.

How to check

Good lighting is important. Look for nits by parting hair in small sections, going from one side of the head to the other. Check carefully, looking close to the scalp. 'Nits' are most predictably found on hairs at the nape of the neck and behind the ears, where they are protected from extremes of light and temperature. However, they may be laid anywhere on the hair, especially in warm weather.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The Head Lice Policy will be reviewed triennially or earlier if necessary.

This policy was reviewed by *Governors* on: November 1st 2017

Signed:

Name: (Headteacher) Date:

Name: (Chair of Governors) Date: