

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

Background

Head lice are common and may spread in any situation where individuals gather and are in close contact. It is recognized that, from time to time, students enrolled in schools may come in contact with head lice. The identification, management and treatment of head lice shall be a co-operative endeavour between the family, the school community and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, with primary responsibility resting with the parent.

An outbreak of head lice in a school is not considered a health hazard. It is important to note that the presence of head lice is not a reflection on the level of cleanliness or parenting skills of a home. Head lice do not transmit disease.

Procedures

To ensure a common approach to the management of head lice in school communities in the District, the following procedures are provided:

1. A consultative process, which meets the needs of individual school communities, shall be developed. The process must involve the Parents' Advisory Council, the Health Authority and school staff.
 - 1.1 Discuss current process as needed with Parents' Advisory Council and staff.
 - 1.2 Establish roles and responsibilities including decisions about who is involved, what will or will not be done.
2. There shall be a process for examining students on a regular basis.
 - 2.1 Home examination only, or
 - 2.2 Trained staff member(s), or
 - 2.3 By a trained parent volunteers, or
 - 2.4 By a combination of above.
 - 2.5 Checks are to be carried out as needed.
 - 2.6 Confidentiality must be maintained.
3. Current relevant information shall be available to the school community early in the school year.
 - 3.1 Offer appropriate training to detect head lice.
 - 3.2 Publish relevant information in newsletter(s).
 - 3.3 Make videos and print materials available to school community.

4. Upon the report and confirmation of head lice in the school, notification shall take place in a timely and sensitive manner.
 - 4.1 For confirmed instances of head lice, verbal notification shall be given as soon as possible.
 - 4.2 Written notification shall be given where and when appropriate and in line with the school process.
 - 4.3 Notification shall include general information about head lice and treatment alternatives.
5. Upon notification parents may choose to temporarily withdraw their child from school for immediate treatment. However, no child may be prohibited from attending or participating at school because of head lice.
 - 5.1 Children with confirmed head lice shall remain with their class until the parent picks them up or until the end of the school day.
6. Treatment shall take place in a timely manner and follow the recommended protocol as outlined by the Health Authority and/or the Ministry of Health (see B.C. Health Guide).
 - 6.1 Parents' Advisory Councils might consider purchasing treatment products such as shampoos and nit combs to be available to the parent community.
7. If a parent is non-compliant with the reasonable application of District procedures then the matter shall be referred to the Superintendent or designate.
 - 7.1 If after repeated attempts to support the parent in this matter, by providing information, assistance, and treatment products, the problem is not being addressed in the home, it may be necessary to involve the Superintendent or designate.

Legal Reference: *Sections 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act*
Health Act

