



## Student Health - Pediculosis (Head Lice)

### Background

KTCEA understands that head lice infestations are neither a health hazard nor sign of poor hygiene but can result in significant stigma and psychological stress; but at the same time, it recognizes that there are concerns regarding the potential transmission of pediculosis in schools. The detection and resolution of identified cases requires close communication between school staff, parents and public health professionals.

### Guidelines

In all cases of pediculosis, care will be taken to protect affected individuals from undue invasion of privacy and corrective steps will be undertaken with sensitivity to the needs of students and families.

| #  | Procedure  | Roles & Responsibilities |
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| 1. | Each year, principals, in collaboration with Nation Health Centers and/or Alberta Health Services or utilizing AHS online resources, will ensure that students, parents and school staff are provided with information regarding the identification, prevention and treatment of head lice. An information package will be sent home with each student in September. | Principals               |
| 2. | Principals shall develop screening procedures, through consultation with Alberta Health Services, to conduct head lice inspections using school staff trained in identification of lice.   | Principals               |
| 3. | Students suspected of having head lice will be notified and supported in a confidential, nonjudgmental manner. School staff shall be cognizant of all aspects of student wellness when supporting students through this issue.   | Principals, Staff        |
| 4. | If there is evidence that a student may be infected, the principal will contact the parent to confirm the child is infected and to request treatment of the student as soon as possible. The principal shall provide information regarding the identification, prevention and treatment of head lice to all students within the class as a precautionary measure.    | Principals, Parents      |
| 5. | If feasible, the parent will pick up the student to commence treatment and the student may return to school after a treatment is applied.  | Parents, Guardians       |
| 6. | If it is necessary for the student to remain home during treatment, the school will ensure the educational program continues by  | Principals, Teachers     |

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|    | providing work as appropriate.   |  |
| 7. | Treatment of head lice is detailed in Alberta Health Services resource information found online at <a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/how-to-treat-head-lice.aspx">https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/how-to-treat-head-lice.aspx</a>   | Principals, Teachers, Staff, Parents, Students |
| 8. | If the parent/guardian requires additional support for the treatment process, we recommend to contact the Nation's health Center.  | Principals, Teachers, Staff, Parents, Students |
| 9. | If needed, additional information can be provided to Parents/Guardians on the following:<br>10.1 Be aware of the signs and symptoms of infestation.<br>10.2 Be familiar with the technique for examining hair for lice and nits.<br>10.3 As part of a regular hygiene routine, examine their children's head on a regular basis for signs of infestation.<br>10.4 Notify the school and others who have come into contact with the child who has lice.<br>10.5 Be aware of the importance of treatments and environmental control measures within the home.<br>10.6 Carry out treatment in consultation with Alberta Health Services, a pharmacist or family physician for appropriate treatment measures.<br>10.7 Inform the school when treatment has been completed.<br>10.8 To prevent further infestation, inspect the child's hair to identify and remove all nits | Parents/Guardians                              |

**Definitions:**

**Head Lice** refers to tiny grey/brown insects that live only on the scalp of human beings. They crawl quickly but cannot fly or jump. They are not found on household pets. Having head lice does not mean you are unclean. They do not spread disease. The saliva from head lice when feeding can cause itching. Scratching may cause sores, which can get infected. Adult female lice glue eggs on the hair shaft close to the scalp. Live eggs are oval and dark in colour similar to the hair colour. They are stuck to the hair and do not fall off if you touch them. Even after the eggs hatch (7-10 days), the white shells stay on the hair shaft. Baby lice start at pencil-dot size and mature in 7-14 days molting three times.

**References:**

Alberta Health Services, My Health Alberta.ca Network: How to Treat Head Lice  
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/how-to-treat-head-lice.aspx>

**Procedure Amendments and Updates**

The responsibility for updating and amending this procedure rests with the Associate Superintendent Facilities and Operations.