

City Schools of Decatur Head Lice Procedures

The School Health program at City Schools of Decatur has completed an extensive review of scientific research related to head lice. These efforts have culminated in the creation of procedures related to the management of head lice in school. While recommendations regarding head lice have changed over the past few years, fear and misinformation persist. In addition, the lack of research-based information in the community-both in and out of school-has resulted in unwarranted absences and/or unnecessary expenditure of money on products and/or services. We have refocused our attention on the science of head lice so that we are not unwittingly perpetuating the fear and misinformation associated with this issue.

EXCLUSION

The current recommendation by leading medical experts using evidence-based practice states that students with eggs(nits) and/or head lice should **remain** in school and not be immediately excluded. This is not to say that all children with identified cases of head lice will remain in school all day. The student's parent or guardian will be notified if lice are found and they may decide if they want to pick up their child.

Why exclusion is NOT recommended:

1. **Although head lice are a nuisance, they do not cause disease and are not dangerous to the child or to others.** Children with a common cold, which easily passes from student to student, are allowed to stay in school. Children who are not sick and pose no risk of illness should not be excluded from school.
2. **By the time head lice is discovered, the child has usually had them for 3-4 weeks.** Therefore, it makes no sense to immediately exclude them from class.
3. **MOST IMPORTANTLY, school is not a high risk area for getting head lice.** Over the last 10 years, multiple studies have proven that school rarely is the site of lice transmission. The vast majority of cases of head lice are spread by friends & family members who play or live together.
4. **No-Nit Policies do not reduce the transmission of head lice in schools.** Research has estimated that children with lice lose an average of four school days per year when a "no-nit" policy is enforced. The CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and National Association of School Nurses all recommend eliminating "no-nit" policies in schools.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

1. If active head lice or nits(eggs) are found on a student, the parent or guardian will be confidentially notified.
2. Going forward, classroom notification of a case of head lice **will no longer occur.** Leading public health experts recommend keeping this information confidential to the student's family only.
3. Classroom checks of students have been proven ineffective in predicting/assessing cases of head lice in schools and therefore will not be enforced.

We will continue to stay abreast of the latest research and recommendations regarding the treatment and management of head lice and will make it a priority to communicate any changes or modifications to our procedures. As always, please feel free to contact your school nurse with questions you have regarding this or any other school health issues.

Additional information can be found at:

www.aap.org American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/135/5/e1355.full.pdf>

<https://www.pediatricnursing.net/ce/2016/article4005226235.pdf>