

OAK HILL ACADEMY

Policy on Lice

If a child is suspected to have nits or lice during the school day, the child will be checked by the nurse. If it is determined that the child has nits or lice, they will be sent home at that point. Siblings will also be checked.

If outside of the school day, a child is found to have nits or lice, the parents must notify the school nurse immediately.

The child will not be allowed back to school, until the child is checked by the nurse (or pediatrician) and is found to be "nit free." Siblings will also be checked.

Other students within that immediate class will be checked first, with the remaining students in that grade to follow.

On the day that nits or lice are found, parents in that affected grade will receive a detailed letter. All parents in the school will receive a general email stating that lice have been found within a particular grade. Within the affected class – coats, scarves and hats will be bagged in plastic for one week.

School Preventative Measures

1. Students will be told and reminded not to share items of clothing (hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms); hair brushes, combs, hair accessories; towels; headphones.
2. Physical Education classes will no longer use pinnies.
3. Art smocks for students in grades K-4 must be brought in only on the day of art and must return home that day to be laundered. Upper School students will use individual disposable plastic smocks.
4. If headphones are needed for a project (in grades 1-8), students will be asked to supply their own.
5. A specialized disinfectant spray will be used in the affected classroom for the carpet and any furniture. Vacuuming will continue to occur on a daily basis.
6. In the affected class, coats, scarves, and hats will be bagged in plastic for one week.

What are Lice?

Head lice are small wingless insects whose only hosts are humans. The louse feeds on blood several times daily and resides close to the scalp to maintain its body temperature. The life cycle of the head louse has three stages: egg, nymph, and adult.

Nits are head lice eggs. They are hard to see and are often confused for dandruff or hair spray droplets. They are usually found at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. They are .08mm by .03mm, oval and usually yellow to white in color. Nits take about one week to hatch.

The egg hatches to release a nymph. The nit shell becomes a more visible dull yellow and maintains attached to the hair shaft. It is about the size of a pinhead. The nymph becomes an adult about 7 days after hatching.

The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, has 6 legs, and is tan to grayish white. In persons with dark hair, the adult louse will appear darker. Females are larger than males and can lay up to 8 nits per day. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head.

Introduction

Head lice are a communicable malady that affects 6-12 million of school-age children each year, most commonly ages 3-11. Head lice, are not known to transmit disease; however, secondary bacterial infection of the skin resulting from scratching can occur with any lice infestation. Head lice are not a sign of uncleanliness, they prefer clean hair because it is easier to latch on.

Head lice are spread by the direct contact with the hair of an infected person. Such contact can be common among children during play at:

- school, • home, • elsewhere (sports activities, playgrounds, camp, slumber parties, etc.)

Lice can also be transmitted by:

- wearing clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, or hair ribbons worn by an infested person

- using infested combs, brushes, or towels
- lying on a bed, couch, pillow, carpet, or stuffed animal that has recently been in contact with an infested person.

Signs and Symptoms of Head Lice Infestation

- Tickling feeling of something moving in hair.
- Itching caused by an allergic reaction to the bites of the head louse.
- Irritability and difficulty sleeping; head lice are most active in the dark.
- Sores on head caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria found on the person's skin.

How to Diagnosis

Since nymphs and adult lice are very small, move quickly, and avoid light, they can be difficult to find.

- Use a magnifying glass with a light and a fine-toothed comb.
- If crawling lice are not seen, finding nits firmly attached within a ¼ inch of the base of the hair shaft, strongly suggests (but does not confirm) that a person is infected and should be treated.
- Nits that are attached more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft, are almost always dead or already hatched. If so, infestation is probably old and no longer active, as long as no live nymphs or adult lice are seen.
- Nits are often confused with dandruff, hair spray droplets, and dirt particles.

Treatment

If your child is found to have nits or lice, you must contact the school nurse immediately. Your child may not attend school until he/she is checked by the nurse and is found to be "nit free."

- Use an over-the-counter medicated shampoo or a mediated shampoo prescribed by your physician for the treatment of head lice. Follow the package directions carefully.

- If the infested person has very long hair (longer than shoulder length), it may be necessary to use a second bottle.
- Do **not** use a cream rinse, conditioner or shampoo before using lice medicine.
- 8-12 hours after treatment, comb dead or remaining live lice out of hair using a fine-toothed nit comb. Combing is essential, since nits and lice do not wash out.
- After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2-3 days may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks to be sure all nits and lice are gone.
- Retreatment generally is recommended for most prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) drugs after 9-10 days in order to kill any surviving matured lice before they produce new eggs.
- Examine members of your household who have had close contact with the person who has lice.

Supplemental Measures:

Machine wash and dry using hot water (130 degrees F) and high heat cycle:

- clothing
- bed lines
- other items infested person wore or used
- items may also be dry cleaned
- vacuum floor, furniture, carpeting, any upholstered fabric, including car seats
- launder or place stuffed animals in a sealed plastic bag for two weeks
- soak combs and brushes in hot water (130 degrees F) for 5 – 10 minutes

Prevention

Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head contact and much less frequently by sharing clothing and belongings onto which lice or nits may have crawled or fallen.

Lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off of a person and cannot feed. Nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the temperature found close to the human scalp.

The following steps can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head contact during play and other activities at home, school, elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp, etc.)
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair accessories.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels.
- Machine wash and dry on high heat (130 degrees F) any clothing or bed linens.
- Vacuum floor, carpeting, furniture, or any upholstered item.

References

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Head lice prevention and control

<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/index.html>

Resources for Parents

- Kids Health Parents Site
<http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/common/lice.html>
- Center for Disease Control
<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/index.html>
- CNN Health Files
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhbgLCTQdQc>

[Go to next page for Lice Identification Pictures...](#)

Lice Identification Pictures



Images to assist in the identification of head lice and their eggs.
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>



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