



# MILING PRIMARY SCHOOL

## HEAD LICE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Miling Primary School has developed the following head lice policy in consultation with the School Board, P&C, teachers, the Community (School) Nurse and the Department of Health. The aim of this Policy is to ensure a consistent, coordinated and cooperative approach to managing head lice in the school community.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Parents' responsibilities are:

- to learn about head lice infestation and management by reading the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet;
- to regularly check their child's hair for head lice infestation;
- to treat their child's hair immediately if the child has head lice, using the advice in the Head Lice Fact Sheet;
- to inform the school and other close contacts if their child has a head lice infestation, and to confirm that treatment of their child's hair has commenced; and
- to be aware of and follow the school's head lice management policy.

#### The Community (School) Nurse's role is:

- to provide information, advice and education to parents and the school community about head lice management;
- to provide additional advice for families experiencing persistent head lice infestation; and
- to provide additional education about head lice management to 'Head Lice Resource Parents' as requested.

#### The School's responsibility is:

- to develop, implement and maintain a head lice management policy;
- to ensure that parents and staff are aware of the school's head lice policy, and that parents are provided with a copy of the Department of Health's Head Lice Fact Sheet when their child is enrolled and on request;
- to provide information and support to families; and
- to advise the school community where head lice are detected in classrooms.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD IS FOUND TO HAVE HEAD LICE?

The School undertakes the following steps to ensure that a clearly defined process is followed when a child is found to have head lice:

#### Day 1:

- The student is given a brief, age-appropriate explanation about the head lice.
- A *Letter to Parents of a Child Found to have Head Lice* is sent home with the student at the end of the day [see sample Letter]. The Letter informs the parents that their child has head lice and advises them that, as required by the *School Education Act 1999*, the child must commence head lice treatment before returning to school. A copy of the Department of Health's *Head Lice Fact Sheet* is on the reverse of this letter.
- Parents of the other students in the class are sent an information letter on the same day, asking them to check their child's hair for head lice and advising them how to do this more effectively, using the Department of Health recommended hair conditioner method.

**Day 2:**

- Once treatment has commenced, the parents of the child with head lice should send the child back to school with the completed Confirmation of Treatment tear-off section of the Letter to Parents. Parents are reminded that treatment must be completed over the 10-day period, as recommended by the Department of Health.
- If the Confirmation of Treatment slip, or similar note, is not returned and the student is not able to confirm that treatment has commenced, then the class teacher informs the Principal. They then contact the parents to check that they have received the Letter to Parents and the Head Lice Fact Sheet.
- If the Letter to Parents and the Head Lice Fact Sheet have been received but no treatment has started, then the parents are asked if they are experiencing any difficulty. Appropriate assistance is offered if parents are experiencing difficulty, e.g. serious financial hardship, or literacy or language difficulty.
- If the parents have no particular difficulty, then they are reminded of their responsibility to the child and to the school community. The parents are advised that the child must not return to school until treatment has begun. Parents must return a note to school with the child, or phone the Head Lice Coordinator, to confirm this.

**Day 3:**

- Where a student again returns to school without treatment having commenced, the Principal may ask the Community (School) Nurse, who represents the Department of Health in the school, to undertake phone contact or arrange a home visit with the parent. The purpose of this is to help identify any undisclosed difficulty, and to assist and advise the parents with the head lice treatment.

**Day 4:**

- Where a student yet again returns to school without evidence of treatment, the Principal or delegate will contact the parents and advise that the student is immediately excluded from school, until treatment has commenced and the school notified. The parents will again be offered assistance by the Community (School) Nurse.
- Home work will be provided for the student, with teacher telephone support where appropriate.

**Day 5 – ongoing:**

- Where a student continues to be absent from school without due reason, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Absenteeism Policy. Head Lice infestation is easily treated and is not a disease. Where all parent support and information has been provided, and there is no remaining barrier to treatment, failure to treat is not a valid reason for absence from school.

In the last resort only – where considered appropriate by the Principal and Community (School) Nurse, the family may be referred to the Department of Child Protection, e.g. where a child is experiencing ongoing psychological distress, or if infected sores result from untreated head lice infestation and the sores remain untreated. Informing parents of this decision prior to referral is at the discretion of the Principal.

**EXCLUSION OF A STUDENT FROM SCHOOL**

- Under the *School Education Act 1999*, students found to have head lice may be excluded from school at the discretion of the Principal or delegate until treatment has begun and all live head lice have been removed, in accordance with the Department of Health treatment advice. In practice, this means students can return to school the morning after treatment has commenced, provided that effective treatment is completed consistently over the following 10 days. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for exclusion.
- Students found to have head lice will normally be excluded at the end of the school day, and not earlier, except in circumstances described above for Day 4 and thereafter, or at the discretion of the Principal or delegate.

**REVIEW**

The School Head Lice Policy and Procedures will be reviewed and altered as necessary every 2 years.

**SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSED 2014**