

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

Background

Pediculosis is also commonly referred to as head lice, and can be transmitted in schools. While pediculosis is considered a nuisance that should be treated, it is not deemed a health hazard. This Administrative Procedure outlines the accepted protocols to be followed when a case of pediculosis is detected in a school.

Procedures

1. Proper preventative measures will be communicated at the school level and in classes to ensure that students understand how they are able to minimize the possibility of getting pediculosis.
 - a. Sharing combs and brushes is discouraged.
 - b. Sharing hats, scarves and other garments is discouraged.
 - c. Regular combing of hair encourages early detection of pediculosis.
 - d. Ensuring that clothing and garments are kept separate, with special attention to change rooms. Use of individual lockers is encouraged.
2. Students and families will be informed about common misconceptions about pediculosis.
 - a. Pediculosis can happen in any community, not only in schools.
 - b. Household pets cannot get or transmit pediculosis.
 - c. Live lice cannot jump or fly. Transmission occurs through close contact or sharing personal items with a person who has an infestation.
 - d. Pediculosis cannot be treated with regular shampoo or hair drying. Specialized solutions are required.
 - e. Lice do not spread disease and are not an indication of poor hygiene.
 - f. Pediculosis will not go away on its own. It must be treated with medicated shampoos.
 - g. Anyone can get pediculosis.
3. School staff will not participate in the detection of pediculosis (combing). Parents/guardians will be notified if school staff see signs that a child may have an infestation.

4. When an instance of pediculosis is detected at the school, school staff will contact the parent/guardian and ensure that they understand remedial procedures and best practices to minimize the spread.
 - a. Parents/guardians of the student will be encouraged to check all household members to determine if pediculosis has been transmitted.
 - b. Current information from the [Alberta Health Services website](#) will be shared to help the parents/guardians understand how to treat the issue.
 - c. Students will not be excluded from class, but if they choose to stay home while being treated for lice, teachers will support the student academically.
 - d. Students will be supported in a confidential, non-judgmental manner.
5. School staff will not send out letters alerting parents of a case in the school, rather will increase vigilance for symptoms of pediculosis. Reminders of proper prevention protocols will be regularly shared.
6. When a parent/guardian becomes aware of pediculosis in their child, it is considered best practice to notify the school and/or other students with whom the child has had close contact.

Implemented: November 16, 2023