



# POLICY

**Haddonfield  
Board of Education**

## OPERATIONS

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Management of Pediculosis

### **8454 MANAGEMENT OF PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)**

The Board of Education recognizes the need to maintain a conducive learning environment for all children in the school district. One way to maintain this conducive learning environment is to manage pediculosis, a condition of a person having head lice. Head lice are very small insects that have claws that cling to hair and spend their entire life cycle on the heads of people. Head lice do not spread any diseases and having head lice is not prevented by personal or household cleanliness, use of shampoos, or length of hair. All social and economic groups can be affected by head lice. The management of pediculosis in the school setting should not disrupt the educational process. Evidence-based strategies for the management of pediculosis in the school setting can reduce the incidence of infestations, the social stigma and caregiver strain experienced by students and families, and the negative impact on students' education. The stigma associated with pediculosis can be reduced by providing accurate health education including anticipatory guidance to the school community and implementing evidence-based strategies for the management of pediculosis in schools. Because it is very difficult to totally prevent head lice infestations in schools where children come into close head-to-head contact with each other frequently, the Board of Education authorizes appropriate steps to manage pediculosis.

The presence of nits (the eggs of lice) without active head lice will not prohibit a child from attending school.

The Board recognizes parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice and school staff members will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families in managing pediculosis. The school physician will have the primary responsibility for incorporating the protocol for pediculosis management within the Standing Orders for the School District of Haddonfield. The school nurse will provide accurate health education to the school community focused on dispelling common myths about pediculosis, and develop written and on-line information on the Management of Pediculosis that will educate parents/caregivers about the identification of head lice, chosen evidence based treatment options, the importance of adherence with the treatment protocol, and the importance of reassessment for recurrence. The written Management of Pediculosis Information and this Policy will be provided to parents of children identified with active head lice or nits and be made available to all parents upon request.

The school nurse shall provide privacy when conducting a student health assessment for suspected or reported cases of pediculosis. If the school nurse determines a student has active head lice or nits, the parent shall be notified by the school nurse as soon as reasonably possible. If pediculosis is identified on a child, confidentiality is important. To that end, there will be no classroom-wide or school-wide notification. The parent will be provided a copy of the district's written Management of Pediculosis Information and this Policy. The school nurse will advise the parent that prompt treatment of active head lice is in the best interest of their child and treatment shall be required before the student can return to school. The school nurse will return the affected students to class or other school sponsored activities with instruction to avoid head-to-head contact and advise parents/caregivers that their child may stay until the end of the school



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day. If the school nurse cannot contact the parent an email and a letter from the school nurse informing the parent of the presence of active head lice or nits will be sent home with the student along with the written Management of Pediculosis Information and this Policy.

The following action will be taken to prevent the spread of pediculosis in district schools:

1. The school nurse will ensure that written and/or on-line information about the identification, prevention and treatment of pediculosis will be sent to parents/caregivers on a regular basis.
  - a. The information provided to parents will clearly notify parents that treatment should only be performed on their child if active head lice or nits are found in their child's scalp and treatment should not be applied as a preventative measure.
2. Parents will be encouraged to notify the school nurse if they find active head lice or nits in their child's scalp. The school nurse will perform a head check of any student if requested by the parent.
3. When a case of active head lice has been identified by the school nurse, the school nurse shall perform a head check of any of the infested student's siblings in the school. If a sibling(s) attends a different school in the district, the school nurse in the sibling's school will be notified and the school nurse may conduct a head check of the sibling(s).
4. Screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children are or will become infested, and screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in a school community over time. Because of the lack of evidence of efficacy, routine classroom or school-wide screening should be eliminated. However, the school nurse may conduct a head check of other students in the school who may have had head-to-head contact with an infested child.
5. All school staff members will maintain a sympathetic attitude and will not stigmatize and/or blame families who experience difficulty with control measures. All school staff members will act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the school and broader community regarding issues of pediculosis.
6. Each school in the district will educate and encourage children and parents to learn about pediculosis in an attempt to remove any stigma or to prevent any harassment intimidation, and bullying associated with this issue. Any instances of harassment,



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intimidation, and bullying shall be reported and investigated in accordance with the provisions of the district's Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy.

It is unlikely that all head lice infestations can be prevented. Parents/caregivers will benefit from receiving support from the school nurse about the importance of regular surveillance at home, choosing and adhering to the protocols of evidence-based treatment recommendations, and educating to dispel head lice myths. The education mission of schools will be supported by implementing evidence-based policies and strategies under the guidance of the school nurse. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families, and communities far outweighs the perceived risks associated with pediculosis.