

# HEAD LICE

## POLICY

### **Rationale:**

Head lice (pediculosis) are tiny insects that live on the human scalp where they feed and breed. Probably between 2-3% of primary school children are infested at any one time. While they do not carry or transmit disease, they are the most common cause of head itch and scratching which may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, they need to be eradicated.

### **Aims:**

- To ensure that parents accept the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.
- To respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively at school.
- To ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed.
- To ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

### **Implementation:**

- All parents will be asked to sign the consent form for head lice screening to cover their child's enrolment at Plenty Parklands Primary School. Children who do not have signed forms will not take part in the Head Lice screening program.
- Whittlesea City Council provide one free check per year by their Pediculosis nurses. Notices to be given to the teaching staff to be handed out discreetly in the classroom to any child found to have head lice, before the children are dismissed at 3:30.
- While teachers and other staff members may believe that a child is infested with head lice, they are not permitted or qualified to search a child's hair. However classroom teachers are able to visually check a student's hair for the presence of head lice, when it is suspected that head lice may be present. No physical contact with the student must occur during visual checks.
- Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact, and by the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and head gear such as hats.
- The responsibility to exclude a student from school rests with the principal. Schools must follow the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, School Exclusion Table, which notes that principals must exclude infected students (i.e. **those with live head lice**) until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced. A student with head lice can be treated one evening and return to school the next day.
- The presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion.
- The Principal should alert parents/carers, particularly those of other students in the same class. A note will be sent home to inform parents when it is reported to the teacher that a student in their child's class has head lice. It is not avocated that the principal inform the whole school community each time head lice is detected.
- We will demonstrate complete **CARE** for each child's feelings and **RESPECT** their dignity and rights.
- There is no cost to parents for the head lice screen. Parents will have to pay for the treatment, which can be purchased cheaply from Whittlesea City Council or from a chemist.
- We will develop a three way partnership between parents, students and staff to eliminate head lice as a problem at our school thus ensuring a **FAIR GO FOR ALL**.
- This program is supported by the Department of Human Services and Whittlesea City Council.

### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed to reflect new regulations and best practice.