

Head Lice Management Policy

Rationale

The occurrence of head lice is the most common insect infestation in humans throughout the world. Head lice infestation may affect people of any age, nationality, gender or socio-economic group and they have no preference for cleanliness, hair colour or hair type. As head lice cause no disease or illness their presence is as much a social issue as a health or educational issue and detection and treatment needs to be addressed in a way that respects the emotional, social and educational development of the child. People's dignity will be respected and protected at all times.

Guidelines

To help control head lice, St Anthony's School will:

1. Distribute school policies and procedures as well as relevant information for the control, detection and treatment of head lice at the beginning of each year and at times of infestation.
2. Advise parents whenever head lice are found in the school although no child will be sent home when head lice are initially identified.
3. Support parents with practical advice and a sympathetic attitude while stating the school's expectations about responding to head lice infestations.
4. Wherever possible, minimise head to head contact in classes with head lice as this is how they transfer from person to person.
5. Request parents not to send children back to school with head lice until treatment has commenced.
6. Inspect children's hair, with Principal's and child's permission, if the Principal believes checking a child's hair is a necessary part of a head lice control strategy.
7. Undertake treatment only under exceptional circumstances when the Principal has determined it is necessary for the well being and educational development of the child.

To help control head lice, parents with children at St Anthony's will:

1. Take responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice in their children.
2. Ensure children with head lice do not attend school until treatment has commenced.
3. Regularly inspect their children's hair to detect head lice and initiate treatment.
4. Notify the school if their child has head lice and advise when treatment has begun.
5. Follow recommendations, proposed by Queensland Health, and detailed in the school policies and procedures to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the head lice infestation.
6. Comply with school expectations regarding the treatment of head lice.

Procedures

1. Families have the responsibility of detecting and treating head lice in their children. Regular checking is required as children may have head lice without knowing with only around 15%-30% of those with head lice actually experiencing itchiness. If head lice are found, effective treatment should be commenced immediately. The school must be notified as soon as head lice are detected although the child should not be sent to school until effective treatment has commenced.
2. Queensland Health recommend the 'conditioner and comb' technique which should be carried out five times over a ten day period. Chemical treatments are also an option to be used to support the 'conditioner and comb' technique. Care should be taken to follow instructions to ensure the treatment process is completed as recommended.
3. Once the school is notified or becomes aware of head lice in a class, all parents in the class will be notified of the situation by letter. A tear-off slip acknowledging the parent receipt of the letter and indicating the appropriate action taken should be returned to the school. The children in the class will be informed of the presence of head lice in the class so that head lice contact will be reduced or avoided. The dignity and privacy of each child will be respected at all times.
4. It is the responsibility of the parent of every child in a class to take effective action to detect and treat head lice in their children. Reminder letters will be sent home if the infestation of head lice continues.
5. The school will provide relevant information concerning the detection and treatment of head lice to all parents. Sample notes, information about head lice detection, the 'conditioner and comb' technique, the different chemical products and the process to follow if your child has head lice will all be detailed and distributed to parents at all times of infestation.
6. A co-ordinated approach between home and school will help manage head lice infestations. The simple rules which apply to all parents are; check weekly, treat quickly and tell the school.