



Mernda Primary School 0488

HEAD LICE POLICY

RATIONALE

- Head lice (*Pediculus*) 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, head lice are the most common cause of head itch and scratching in children. This may lead to infection and swollen lymph glands; therefore, head lice need to be eradicated.
- Anyone can catch head lice.
- Head lice cannot fly, hop or jump. They spread from person to person by head to head contact. Research indicates that they do not spread through the sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes and hats.

AIMS

For the school to:

- Respond to reports of head lice quickly and effectively
- Ensure that an effective process for treating head lice is well known and consistently followed
- Ensure that parents and guardians are well informed about head lice treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION

- While it is parents who have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice on their children, the school will assist by offering up-to-date information, by offering a screening process, and by alerting parents when head lice are detected.
- Each year, the school will organise to have a member of staff trained by the Department of Human Services or the local council in the detection of head lice.
- On a child's enrolment, the school will ask parents to sign a permission form allowing their children to be screened by trained personnel, for the presence of head lice. This form will cover the duration of the child's schooling at Mernda Primary School. Only children whose parents have returned the permission form will be included in this screening.
- Consistent with Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001, the principal will ensure that the parents of any child found to have live lice are informed that their child is to be excluded from attending school until appropriate treatment has commenced.
- The school will also provide parents of children found to have live lice with information about head lice treatment and prevention.
- Upon their return to school, parents of excluded children must indicate that appropriate treatment has commenced. All excluded children are to undergo another inspection from our trained personnel as soon as possible after recommencing school.
- Shoulder length hair or longer must be tied back while at school.
- The Principal will ensure that information relating to the prevention and eradication of head lice appears throughout the year in the school newsletter, particularly at times of heavy outbreaks.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.