

Head Lice Policy

What are they?

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that live amongst human hair and feed off tiny amounts of blood drawn from the scalp. Adult lice are usually greyish-brown in colour and will grow to no bigger than a sesame seed. Adult lice will lay eggs (nits) on the hair shafts close to the scalp, these usually look like tiny yellow / tan dots and will hatch within one to two weeks. Whilst lice are not dangerous, they are contagious and can be extremely difficult to get rid of when an infestation takes hold. Bites from head lice can cause also cause intense itching and irritation of the scalp, which can be distressing.

Who gets head lice and how do they spread?

Head lice infestation has nothing to do with poor hygiene and can affect people of all social classes and backgrounds. They will move from head-to-head without discrimination and are spread by direct head-to-head contact.

Lice can also be passed on when items such as combs, brushes, scarves, and hats are shared with an affected person. Unfortunately, children are more susceptible to head lice because they are often physically close to one another during play and activities.

How I manage and prevent the spread of head lice within my setting:

- I request that all children with long hair wear it tied back during their time at the setting to prevent the spread of head lice.
- I advise parents to check their children's hair weekly using a special lice comb to help aid early detection.
- I will ensure that all dressing up clothes, particularly hats, scarves and other head gear are washed regularly.
- I ask that parents provide a clearly labelled brush/comb for their child should they wish me to tidy up their hair during the day. (For example, to re-do a pony tail if it has fallen out during active play.)

Parents must inform me immediately if they discover that their child has head lice.

I will inform all parents and regular visitors to the setting but will never name the affected child in respect of confidentiality. All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy, which includes information on the detection, effective treatment and future prevention of head lice.

I will never exclude a child from my setting because they have headlice unless I am concerned that parents are not following recommended guidance to treat and prevent further infestation.

I must consider the health and wellbeing of all children in my care and that of my own family. Where frequent re-infestation occurs, I may seek further advice from the child's health visitor.

Effective Treatment

Medicated shampoos and over the counter treatments are also available to assist with the removal of headlice. Advice should be sought from your pharmacist to ensure the treatment is suitable for your child. Many pharmacies also offer headlice treatment under the Minor Ailments scheme.

Future Prevention

There are several ways you can help to prevent your child from catching head lice, for example keeping long hair tied back when they are likely to be in close contact with others and avoiding sharing brushes, combs, hats, scarves and towels. There are also a variety of repellent shampoos and lotions that can be used on a regular basis. You should always read the instructions and seek the advice of your pharmacist to ensure products are suitable for your child.