



**HARVEST HOME**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

# **Headlice**

## **Policy**

# Headlice Policy



## Help for Non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Harvest Home Primary School on 8468 9000 or email: [harvest.home@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:harvest.home@education.vic.gov.au)

## PURPOSE

This policy sets out the requirements for schools to prevent and control the transmission of head lice. Harvest Home Primary School will manage Head lice in a way that reduces the likelihood of head lice spreading through direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact within the School Community.

## OVERVIEW

Pediculosis or 'head lice' are small, wingless, blood-sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on humans and if isolated from the head they die within 24 hours. People get head lice from direct hair-to-hair contact with another person who has head lice. The responsibility for managing head lice is shared between parents/guardians, schools, and Principals. Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice however the school may conduct head lice inspections throughout the year with prior written consent. Students with live head lice must be excluded until the day after treatment has commenced.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Control of Head Lice in schools

Harvest Home Primary School will control the spread of head lice in 2 ways:

1. Exclusion from school
2. Visual head lice checks in schools

### *Exclusion from school*

When a student is identified with live head lice the following steps will take place:

- As soon as the headlice is detected the family of the student with Headlice will be called to collect their child from the School as soon as possible.
- The student will be excluded from attending school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, school exclusion table – refer to the Victorian Government Health website: [School exclusion table](#).
- The presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice).
- There is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for the child to return to school.

The School will:

- Alert families via a Compass post of the head lice infestation, particularly the families of other students in the same Learning Community as the affected child or children
- Use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation.

Please Note: The Department of Health indicates there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools at any given time, so it is not advised that the Principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

### ***Visual Head Lice Checks in Schools***

There is no requirement for schools to undertake head lice inspection programs. However, if schools wish to do so, they can conduct checks via visual checks only without physical contact which:

- Do not require parent or carer consent
- Are made by people authorized by the Principal, for example, Learning Community Teachers or First aid officers.

Head lice inspections involving the physical examination of a student:

- Are made by people authorised by the Principal, for example, First Aid Officer
- With written parental consent as obtained at the time of enrolment

Parent/Carer consent:

- Should be obtained prior to commencing any physical examination of a student
- Should be provided to families for completion as part of enrolment
- Must be updated when guardianship or custody arrangements change for the student
- Must be updated if families no longer wish to consent to inspections.

### **Prevention of Head Lice at Harvest Home Primary School**

Although the responsibility for detecting and treating head lice rests with families (parents/carers), it is important that practical advice and support be available.

Harvest Home Primary School will work collaboratively with families and the broader school community to implement practices and procedures to prevent and minimise the impact of Head Lice outbreaks.

Harvest Home Primary School will provide strategies that may be implemented to prevent the transmission of head lice as listed below:

#### ***Leadership and commitment***

It is considered best practice to:

- Take a whole school approach to the prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the Department of Health, refer to the [Resources tab](#)
- Ensure the whole school community is aware of and understands this policy.

#### ***Healthy Physical Environment***

Head lice do not live or breed on furniture, carpets, clothes or soft toys and cannot be spread through sharing items of clothing, for example, hats.

However, it is best practice for schools to:

- Encourage families to tie their child's hair back if it is long
- Implement learning activities that minimise head-to-head contact during head lice outbreaks.

#### ***Healthy Culture***

Harvest Home Primary School will:

- Exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality, and help reduce stigma
- maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.

#### ***Student teaching and learning***

Harvest Home Primary School may (as suitable):

- Incorporate learning activities focused on the prevention of head lice into the curriculum
- Encourage students to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or bullying associated with the issue.

### **Support Staff and Educators**

Harvest Home Primary School will:

- Consider families, students, and staff as key partners in developing and supporting lice prevention initiatives
- Provide general information regarding head lice to families (as suitable and required)

### **Community partnerships**

Harvest Home Primary School may:

- Work with local health professionals, services, and other organisations to increase their capacity to deliver and promote head lice prevention initiatives
- Access community educational resources and support such as community health centers or local government as suitable

### **Parent/Carer Detection and Treatment Responsibilities**

Families have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.

Responsibilities include:

- Not sending their children to school with untreated head lice
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk
- Regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members
- Notifying the school if their child is affected and when treatment commenced.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

- [Infectious Diseases](#)

Relevant legislation

- [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 \(Vic\)](#)

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Referenced in the staff induction process
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings, as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions, as required
- Included as an annual reference in the school newsletter, as required
- Made available in hard copy from a Principal class member, upon request

## **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Policy last reviewed	August, 2023
Approved by	Andrew Bouzikas (Principal)
Next scheduled review date	August, 2026