



# QUANTOCK

## EDUCATION TRUST

# Management of Head Lice Policy

**LINKS:**

ADOPTED ON: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: CEO

TRUSTEE COMMITTEE: People, Performance, Pay & Recruitment

DATE RATIFIED BY TRUSTEES: January 2024

AUDIENCE: All Trust Staff & parents

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2027

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Here at Quantock Education Trust we acknowledge the unpleasantness, potential expense and inconvenience associated with head lice infestation. We are sympathetic to the circumstances families find themselves in when infestation occurs. We are aware that head lice infest people of all ages and not only children.

## **2 Aims and Objectives**

2.1 To ensure parents are aware of the need to be checking their children's hair regularly and know how to deal with the problem of head lice.

2.2 It is our policy to react to infestation within the school in such a way as to:

- Minimise the embarrassment, discomfort and potential stigmatisation of the infested person;
- To minimise the risk of infection to other members of the school community.

2.3 To this end we remain vigilant and aware of the potential presence of head lice. We do not check children's heads for infestation but where infestation is noted we always:

- Send a letter home to all parents in the affected class alerting them to presence of infestation and advising on the need to check their child and what to do should they find head lice present (Appendix 2)
- Send a letter home to the affected child's parents informing of the need to act and to check the whole family's hair as well as the chance to keep their child at home to treat the infestation should the parent request it. This should not be necessary if immediate action is taken (Appendix 3).

2.4 In addition:

- From time to time, the school will inform parents with regard to avoiding head lice, treatment and current thinking on the subject.

2.5 We make all reasonable efforts to be available to speak to parents who are distressed or confused by this matter or by our actions, but always maintain the position that "The prime responsibility for the identification, treatment and prevention of head lice in a family has to lie with the parents".

2.6 There is uncertainty with regard to the effectiveness of specific preparations beyond conditioning and combing but we do recommend that where infestation persists parents should contact their GP or pharmacy. Over the counter Head lice shampoos are considered to be ineffective in the treatment of head lice.

2.7 Appendix 1 reflects the Trust's current guidance on this subject.

## **3 Monitoring and Review**

3.1 The Board of Trustees has a named Trustee with responsibility for all health and safety matters. It is this Trustee's responsibility to keep the Local Governance Committees (LGC's) informed of new regulations regarding any health and safety, and to ensure that the Trust

regularly reviews its procedures with regard to health and safety matters. The Trustee in question also liaises with the local authority and other external agencies where necessary, to ensure that the school's procedures are in line with those of the local authority.

- 3.2 The Headteacher implements the Trust's Management of Head lice policy on a day-to-day basis, and ensures that all staff are aware of the details of the policy as it applies to them. The Headteacher also reports to governors annually on any health and safety issues.
- 3.3 This policy will be reviewed at any time on request from the Governors or Trustees, or at least once every three years.

## Appendix 1 – Information Leaflet for Parents/Carers

### FACTS ABOUT HEAD LICE

- Head lice are small insects which are usually found close to the scalp where there is warmth, food and shelter from detection.
- They cannot fly, jump or hop and are spread where heads touch each other.
- Head lice are very common and affect most children at some time in their life.
- Most head lice infections are not caught in school.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT/DETECT/TREAT HEAD LICE?

#### 1. PREVENTION

Children should have their own comb and be taught how to use it. Combing hair at least twice a day and regular shampooing and conditioning will help to prevent any head lice infection becoming established.

#### 2. DETECTION

- Shampoo hair and apply plenty of conditioner to make the hair wet and slippery.
- Comb the hair from the scalp outwards, section by section, with a fine plastic tooth comb, a detector comb, (available from chemists) for at least 10 minutes over a sink, bath tub or disposable towel. If lice are present they will fall out or stick to the comb. Please note that medical advice suggests that if there are no moving head lice, the child is not considered to have head lice.
- The comb should be washed with water or wiped clean with a paper napkin between each stroke.
- Repeat this method as often as required, e.g. at routine hair washing sessions.

#### 3. TREATMENT

Wet-combing method It is recommended that this is a safe and effective way of treating head lice and should be used first before considering the use of insecticide lotions.

- This method of treatment should be carried out every 3-4 days over a 2 week period (a total of 4 sessions over 2 weeks).
- The principles of this method (sometimes called the “bug-busting” method) are: WASH, RINSE, CONDITION AND COMB.

This method is as follows:

1. Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo.
2. Put ordinary conditioner on the hair.
3. Then either sitting upright or bowed over a sink, whichever is most comfortable, comb the hair with a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
4. Untangle the hair using a close toothed comb or lice detector comb purchased from the local pharmacies.

5. Slot teeth into a section of hair, right at the roots, touching the scalp gently.
6. Check the comb for lice between each stroke. Remove lice by wiping the comb on kitchen paper. The lice caught between the teeth should be removed with a cocktail stick or nailbrush.
7. Work all over the head, section by section, combing and cleaning until the comb comes through louse free.
8. Rinse the hair, leave hair dripping wet. Use a wide toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair again.
9. Keeping the hair wet, use the lice detector comb to comb the rinsed hair. Work all over the head until the comb comes through louse free. Once it is known that one member of the family has lice, the whole family should use this method to see if they have head lice.

### **Treatment with Insecticide Lotions/Rinses**

- Insecticides are used when the wet combing method is not thought to be effective.
- Insecticides should only be used if live lice have been found in the hair – it should not be used to prevent head lice, only to treat the condition.

Set out below are the advantages and disadvantages of using insecticide lotions:

#### Advantages

- A quick and easy method of treatment.
- Evidence indicates that the use of insecticide LOTIONS as treatment are successful. However, insecticide SHAMPOOS are considered to be ineffective in the treatment of head lice.

#### Disadvantages

- Alcoholic preparations may induce an allergic reaction.
- A more expensive method than wet combing.
- Inappropriate repetitive use can lead to resistance to further head lice infections.
- A dislike of using a pesticide to treat head lice.

Insecticides need to be used with caution:

- In pregnant women and nursing mothers.
- In infants under 6 months old.
- On a repetitive basis. Can cause skin irritation if used repeatedly.
- Can affect coloured, permed or bleached hair.

Insecticides are available from a pharmacy, without a prescription. It is important that instructions on use are followed carefully. After treatment, the wet-combing method should be used to check for head lice and to remove dead eggs.

A second application is recommended seven days after the first one, but if the lice appear to be unaffected by the product (some lice may have developed resistance to be a particular insecticide) or if the problem persists, you should seek advice from your GP, who can advise you on further treatments which may be only available on prescription.

It should be noted that chlorine may lessen the effect of some insecticides – and it is recommended that if the child has been swimming in a chlorinated pool in the 72 hours before treatment the hair should be washed and dried before lotion is applied. Swimming should not be banned after treatment.

Head lice shampoos are considered to be ineffective in the treatment of head lice.

**Remember to let your child's school know that you have found head lice and have undertaken the appropriate treatment.**

## **Appendix 2 – Letter to parents of affected class**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to inform you that at least one member of your child's class has been found to have head lice present in their hair.

Please check your child tonight for any signs of infection. If you require further advice or information, please download our Management of Head Lice Policy, which is available on line at our website.

Alternatively, please ask at the main office for a copy of our Management of Head Lice Policy.



### **Appendix 3 – Letter to parents of affected child**

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I am writing to inform you that your child ..... (Name) ..... has been found today to have head lice present in their hair.

We ask you to please ensure that the living, moving lice, are out of the hair before returning your child to school. There is no reason why this should involve your child in missing any school time. If you thoroughly comb the hair with a fine toothed “nit” comb the adult lice should be removed. However, any eggs present may continue to hatch out and constant vigilance and repeated combing or treatment is necessary.

We cannot prevent head lice ever appearing at school but we can, with your co-operation, prevent mass infestation and by working in partnership we can keep head lice to a minimum.

I have attached a copy of our Management of Head Lice Policy.