



HEAD LICE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact North Geelong Secondary College on 03 5240 5800 or north.geelong.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the requirements for NGSC to prevent and control the transmission of head lice.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, teaching and non-teaching staff at North Geelong Secondary College, including education support staff, casual relief teachers and visiting teachers.

POLICY

Head lice are tiny insects that live and breed in hair, feeding on blood from biting the skin. They do not have wings, so they cannot fly. Instead, head lice spread by crawling from one person to another and laying eggs (nits).

They are only found on humans and do not live on animals. They cannot survive for more than two days in any other environment, like carpet or furniture.

While head lice are not known to carry disease, they are a nuisance for parents and children. The social stigma associated with head lice infestation can affect children's comfort and confidence.

Head lice can be controlled through a consistent and systematic community approach.

Control of head lice in schools

Schools 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 identifying staff member notifies sick bay staff.
- The student is sent to sick bay for sick bay staff to complete a visual inspection.
- If no live head lice are noted, the student is returned to class.
- If live head lice are noted the following must occur.
 - Sickbay staff notify an assistant principal.
 - The assistant principal informs the family that the student needs to be collected from school and a head lice treatment completed at home.

- The student is excluded from school for 24 hours after the treatment, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, school exclusion table – refer to the health.vic website: [School exclusion table](#).
- Students will be provided with work to complete on-line at home if the 24 hour exclusion occurs over a school day.
- Sick bay staff provide the student with a take home [Fact Sheet](#) to support families.
- Sub school attendants send a notification to the entire year level cohort notifying families of a possible head lice case.

Note 1: the principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school.

Note 2: the presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice).

Note 3: 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.

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 advocated 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 authorised by the principal, for example, classroom teachers.
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Prevention of head lice in schools

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

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 parents 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

Schools must:

- exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality and help reduce stigma (for example, provide a letter to all students involved in inspections, not just those found to have head lice)
- maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.

Student teaching and learning

Schools could:

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

Support staff and educators

It is best practice to:

- consider families, students and staff as key partners in developing and supporting lice prevention initiatives
- provide general information regarding head lice in the school prospectus, school newsletter or on the school website for parent reference.

Community partnerships

Schools can:

- 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 centres or local government.

Parent or carer detection and treatment responsibilities

Parents and carers 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

- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):
- Royal Children's Hospital Head Lice [Fact Sheet](#)
- Related Policy: [Infectious Diseases](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	10/08/26
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before 08/28