



## 1. BACKGROUND

Head lice can be a cause of concern and frustration for parents, guardians, carers, teachers and children. Williamstown Primary School recognises that parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, however we believe that the control of head lice infestations is a shared responsibility amongst the School, families and other agencies. The School, therefore, has a role in the management of head lice infestations and in providing support for the parents/guardians and students.

Williamstown Primary School acknowledges that most schools will have some students with head lice at any given time and that it is important for the School to assist families in managing this problem.

## 2. PURPOSE

This Head Lice Policy is in-line with DEECD Guidelines and focuses on the management of head lice infestations at the school and the support for the families involved.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Reinforce a consistent approach to the management of head lice infections.
- Minimise the anxiety for families and students by ensuring that parents are assisted and supported in managing head lice problems by regular distribution of up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians/carers and staff.
- Achieve a decrease in the incidence of head lice.
- Assist in ensuring a greater awareness within the whole school community of issues surrounding head lice.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

*“Head Lice”* are parasitic insects found on the heads of people.

*“School”* means Williamstown Primary School.

## 4. PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**4.1** Once head lice are detected the school requires that parents/guardians/carers refrain from sending their children to school with untreated head lice. It should be noted that students may be treated one evening and return to school the next day and that the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion. Parents/guardians need to be aware that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem. If a student re-attends school with live lice the school will again exclude the student until the live insects have been removed.

**4.2** The school will assist by providing parents/guardians/carers with comprehensive advice about the use of safe treatment practices, which do not place students' health at risk.

**4.3** The school will use a pro-forma letter (see Appendix 1) of notification to parents/guardians of those students found or suspected to have head lice,

which incorporates a detachable slip at the bottom, asking parents/guardians to indicate the treatment used and when it commenced. The return of this slip to the school is strongly encouraged.

**4.4** The school is committed to helping reduce stigma and maintain confidentiality following head lice inspections by sending a letter to all families in a class where head lice has been detected.

**4.5 Prevention strategies**

**4.5.1** The School will train appropriate School personnel in the detection and management of head lice.

**4.5.2** Persons authorised by the School principal (e.g. teachers) will visually check (with no physical contact with the child) a student's hair if the presence of head lice is suspected.

**4.5.3** The school will strongly recommend that parents/guardians carry out the following procedures:

- regular (preferably once per week) inspection of their child/children's hair for lice or lice eggs (using conditioner and a head lice comb is the most effective method).
- tying back long hair to assist in preventing the spread of head lice.
- regular inspection of all household members followed by treatment if head lice are detected.
- upon detection of head lice, notify the school and advise when treatment has commenced.

**4.6** Within the first month of the school year Williamstown PS will distribute up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians/carers and staff via the newsletters. This will be redistributed as required.

**4.7** Head Lice Management Agreement (see appendix 2) will be distributed to prep families at the beginning of the year and new families upon arrival.

**4.8** In the event that live lice are present, the family will be contacted and requested to collect their child for treatment. The responsibility to exclude a child from a school rests with the Principal or person in charge of the school and being aware that exclusion only refers to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

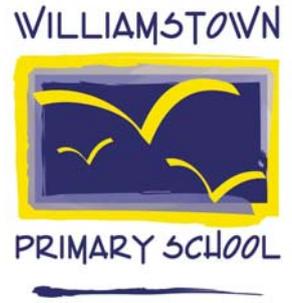
**5. REVIEW AND POLICY HISTORY**

This policy is due for formal review in August 2017 although it may be changed at any time as required after discussion with School Council and the Principal.

**Policy History:**

<b>Version Approval Date</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
May 2012	Comprehensive review
August 2014	Update

**Appendix 1 - Letter**



Dear Parent/Guardian/Carer,

Head lice or eggs are suspected to have been detected on your child and it is very important for you to treat your child as soon as possible, using safe treatment practices. Please see the attached pamphlet, *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, from the Department of Human Services. This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

It is very important for you to notify Williamstown Primary School and to advise when appropriate treatment has commenced.

It is important to note, that health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note that this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

Please complete the below form and provide this to your child's teacher, on the return of your child to school. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the school on 9397 1248.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Duxson  
Principal



**Action Taken – Student Head Lice  
Parent/Guardian/Carer Response Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Student's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my child should not attend school with untreated head lice.

I used the following recommended treatment for head lice or eggs for my child:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Treatment commenced:** \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of parent/carer/guardian:** ..... **Date:**.....

## Appendix 2 – Head Lice Management Agreement



### HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS

#### WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Head lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents/guardians/carers, teachers and children. Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the control and management of head lice infections is a shared responsibility amongst a number of agencies, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; Department of Human Services; schools and parents. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is responsible for providing advice and support to schools regarding head lice management.

This agreement outlines the:

- Responsibilities of both the school and the parent/guardian/carer;
- Importance of an all inclusive health approach, to ensure an appropriate and efficient solution to the problem of head lice.

#### *Responsibilities*

Parent/Guardian/Carer responsibilities include:

- Regularly (preferably once a week) inspecting their child's hair to look for lice or lice eggs and regularly inspecting all household members and then treating them if necessary;
- Ensuring their child does not attend school with untreated head lice;
- Using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk (see the attached *Treating and Controlling Head Lice* pamphlet).
- Notifying the school if their child is affected and advising the school when the treatment has started via an *Action Taken* form;
- Notifying parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

I have read and agree to the above responsibilities:

Signature of parent/carer/guardian: ..... Date.....

Signature of parent/carer/guardian: ..... Date.....

School responsibilities include:

- Distributing policies and information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians/carers and staff and having clear protocols for the inspection program that the school implements;
- Developing a school policy on head lice which reinforces an accurate, consistent approach to the management of head lice infections, which is approved by the School Council;
- Ensuring those person's authorised by the school principal, e.g. teachers, only visually check a student's hair, i.e. with no physical contact with the child, if the presence of head lice is suspected;
- Encouraging parents/guardians/carers to continue to regularly (preferably once per week) check their child for head lice and providing a sympathetic attitude and practical advice to those parents experiencing difficulty with the control measures;
- Being aware that the responsibility to exclude a child from a school rests with the principal or person in charge of the school and being aware that exclusion only refers to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.
- Being aware of the recommendation that parents should be contacted to collect their child from school upon detection of live lice.
- Being aware that there is no requirement in the *Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001* for a child treated for head lice to obtain a clearance certificate to be issued either by a general practitioner or a municipal council, on return to school.
- Where appropriate, and at the principal's discretion, providing an alert notice to the school community, when head lice has been widely detected in the school;
- Encouraging parents/guardians/carers to identify treatment used and the commencement date, via an *Action Taken Form*.

Williamstown Primary School is committed to managing head lice in a sensitive and confidential manner. We are committed to the above responsibilities.

Signature of Principal: ..... Date: .....

Appendix 2 – Head Lice Alert Notice



**Head Lice Alert**

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

It has come to our attention that some students in the class may have head lice and we seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair this week (\_\_/\_\_/\_\_ to \_\_/\_\_/\_\_).

Head lice do not transmit infectious diseases – they are transmitted by having head to head contact with someone who has head lice. You may be reassured to know that head lice are commonly found in places other than at Williamstown Primary School. Head lice are common in school-aged children and are the most adaptable of creatures. They have survived living solely on humans for 10,000 years!!!!

What can you do?

We seek your cooperation in checking your child's hair and in those instances where head lice or eggs are found, treating your child's hair.

Please see the pamphlet *Treating and Controlling Head Lice*, on the Department of Human Services website (<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/about.htm>). This pamphlet has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs.

How do I treat my child for head lice?

The pamphlet (as noted above) has informative guidelines regarding detecting and treating head lice and eggs. The school also has additional information available regarding treatment and controlling head lice. Please don't hesitate to contact the school on 9397 1248 to obtain this information.

If head lice or eggs are found on your child's hair you need to inform:

- the school and advise when the treatment has started, via the attached *Action Taken Form*.
- parents or carers of your child's friends so they too have the opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary.

When can my child return to school?

Health regulations requires that where a child has head lice, that child should not return to school until the day after appropriate treatment has started. Please note, this refers only to those children who have live head lice and does not refer to head lice eggs.

Williamstown Primary School is aware that head lice can be a sensitive issue and is committed to maintaining your confidentiality.

Kind regards

Andrea Duxson

Date.....