



**HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**
“A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE”

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

I want to take this opportunity to share some information with you regarding Pediculosis, or head lice. Please be assured that the district does not have a lice epidemic. Nevertheless, we have been taking a proactive approach with the lice concerns in our district. We have also been working with the Monmouth County and Holmdel Township Health Departments and district nursing staff to ensure that we are up-to-date on ways to prevent and manage lice.

Pediculosis, or head lice, is a condition that each year affects approximately 6 to 12 million children between the ages of 3 and 12 years of age, and about 1 in every 100 elementary school children. Head lice are parasites generally found on the scalp, around the ears, and at the back of the neck. The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed, and can be the color of your child's hair. Eggs, or nits, are smaller and silver in color.

Head lice are not a sign of poor hygiene and they do not transmit disease. Movement from one child to another can occur during direct head to head contact or by sharing of personal items such as combs, brushes, caps or helmets.

You should be aware that the district follows the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for lice. When lice are evident, Holmdel schools adhere to the following procedures:

- Students are sent home if the school nurse determines that the student has lice.
- Parents are notified to pick up their child. Parents are provided with information on how to treat, and prevent the spread of lice.

- Parents are also advised that they may wish to consult with a physician for treatment.
- Upon returning to school and entering his/her classroom, students must be escorted to the nurse's office and checked by the school nurse for lice.
- If lice are present, the student is sent home for further treatment.
- As recommended by the Center for Disease Control, if the student is undergoing treatment, but nits (eggs) are present, the student can remain in school.
- Schools notify parents that a lice problem exists in their respective child(ren)'s classroom. Parents are also provided with information on how they can treat, and prevent the spread of lice.

It is extremely important for the schools and parents to work together to eradicate the problem. Therefore, at minimum, parents should be taking the following steps at home:

- Look for the most common symptoms of head lice, which is itching and head scratching, particularly at night. Red bite marks or sores may also be noticed on the scalp. You can also check the child's scalp weekly when the hair is wet to see if there are any head lice.
- When a lice problem exists in the community, parents must thoroughly check hair with a magnifying glass and comb hair with a fine tooth comb.
- If lice are present, parents should consult their family pediatrician for their particular child. Follow up by treating the lice with over-the-counter and prescription products, fine combing the child(ren)'s hair and reinspecting his/her scalp and hair for nits and lice. In particular, parents need to shampoo (to destroy the live lice) and fine comb (many times) the nits/eggs out of the hair. It may take a few days until all nits are removed. A second treatment (shampoo and fine combing) may be necessary to ensure everything was destroyed. Therefore, if lice and nits remain, parents should re-treat, fine comb and reinspect again.
- If one child has lice, it is recommended that all children in the household be treated.
- It is recommended that students with long hair wear their hair up or tied back to prevent the spread of lice.

- Launder clothes, bedding, towels and items used by the infested person in the past 48 hours (130°).
- Vacuum floors, carpets and furniture, and discard the vacuum bag.
- Toys, such as stuffed animals, can be put into a tightly closed plastic bag for 14 days or placed in a hot dryer for 30 minutes to destroy the lice. For other items that cannot be washed, seal in a plastic bag for 14 days or dry clean.
- Do not share items such as grooming aids, hats, towels, clothing or pillows.

I have attached some additional information from the CDC, as well as some frequently asked questions that the CDC compiled. Further information is also available via the district website (i.e. PowerPoint with hints and photographs), or by visiting the CDC site for parents <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/index.html>. I encourage you to review the attached information so that you and your family may assist the community in preventing the spread of lice.

While we may not be able to prevent lice, as it is typically brought in from home, we can make every effort to prevent the spread of it in our schools by encouraging the students and staff to take the appropriate precautions. In addition, our facilities department has diligently addressed the cleanliness of the schools, and will be performing deep cleaning over the Thanksgiving Break.

I reassure you that the health and well-being of the students and community are our utmost priority. Have a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,



Robert McGarry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

RM/md
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